

Huskers Illustrated

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Joe Dailey

2003
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ISSUE

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Schuler



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Something Old, Something New

*New athletic director says uniform issue
became somewhat of a distraction*



**Brian
HILL**

IT WASN'T supposed to be that big a deal when Nebraska made some alterations to their uniforms last season.

It became a big deal.

The change had been a hot topic of conversation among Nebraska fans since word of it first emerged before the 2002 season.

Last year's "modernized" version included stripes running down the sides of the pants, red spandex gussets on the sides of the jerseys and white pants with white jerseys on the road.

Let's just say the new uniforms did not meet with widespread approval. The backlash was no doubt more brutal because the change came during the disappointing 7-7 season.

Nevertheless, new Athletic Director Steve Pederson announced as this edition was going to press that the Huskers will go back to their traditional uniforms — white jerseys with solid red pants on the road and red jerseys with solid white pants at home.

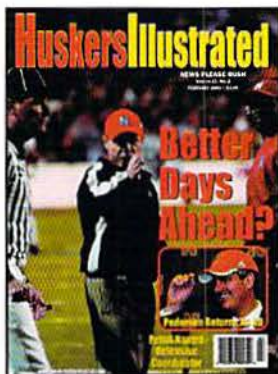
"We did not lose seven games last year because of the uniforms," Pederson said, "but one of the things we believe is important is that we maintain focus. We really don't need distractions, and the uniform issue became some-

what of a distraction."

The return to the "old" uniforms was one of several changes Pederson announced in proclaiming 2003 "A Year for the Fans" during a Feb. 11 news conference.

"I don't think we should ever take fans for granted," Pederson said.

In addition to the uniform changes, season ticket prices will be lowered slightly, restrictions on cheerleader stunts will be eased, and a new and improved Herbie Husker mascot will be unveiled.



Those are just a few of the changes that will be in place by the time the Huskers open the 2003 season by playing host to Oklahoma State on Aug. 30.

There'll also be six new assistants on the Nebraska coaching staff. Former Husker Jimmy Williams was introduced on letter-of-

intent signing day as linebacker coach and the final piece of the restructured coaching staff.

Contributing editor Mike Babcock takes a look at the new coaches and the philosophies of new coordinators Barney Cotton (offense) and Bo Pelini (defense). The new group had little time to get acquainted as the finishing touches were put on the 2003 recruiting class, which is the focus of this issue of Huskers Illustrated.

Our recruiting section includes a signing-day report, capsules of the 19 newest Huskers and much, much more.

As the snow melted in Lincoln, the Nebraska baseball team was headed south to open its 2003 season. New Coach Mike Anderson and the Huskers will bid for their third straight College World Series appearance.

With the start of baseball, spring can't be too far away. Spring football will be here soon.

Next month, we'll have a preview. ■

ON THE COVER

Quarterback recruit Joe Dailey runs the football for Saint Peter's Prep of Jersey City, N.J., and Ryan Schuler of Washington High School in Sioux Falls, S.D., enjoys a light moment during a news conference where he made his signing official. *Dailey photo by Cory K. Doviak. Schuler photo by Lloyd B. Cunningham/c) 2003 Argus Leader. Layout by Scott Bruhn.*

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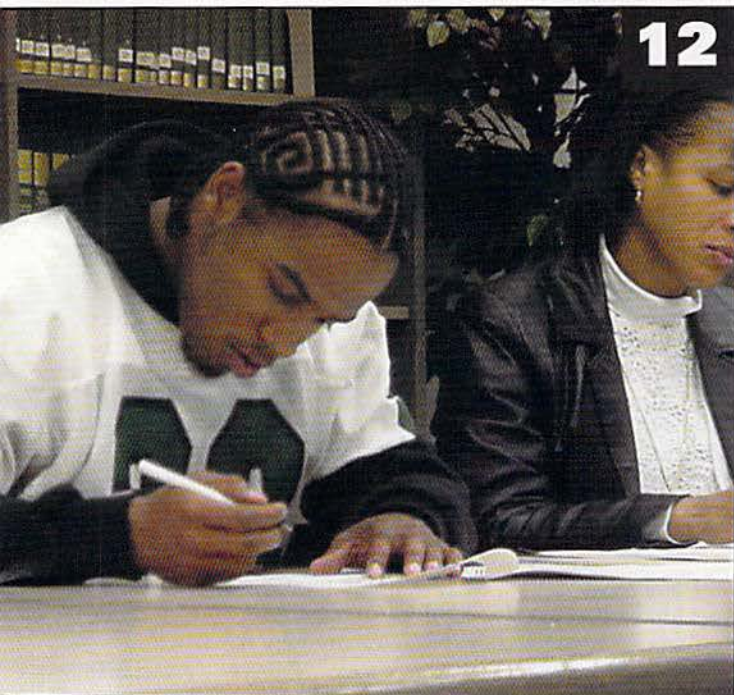
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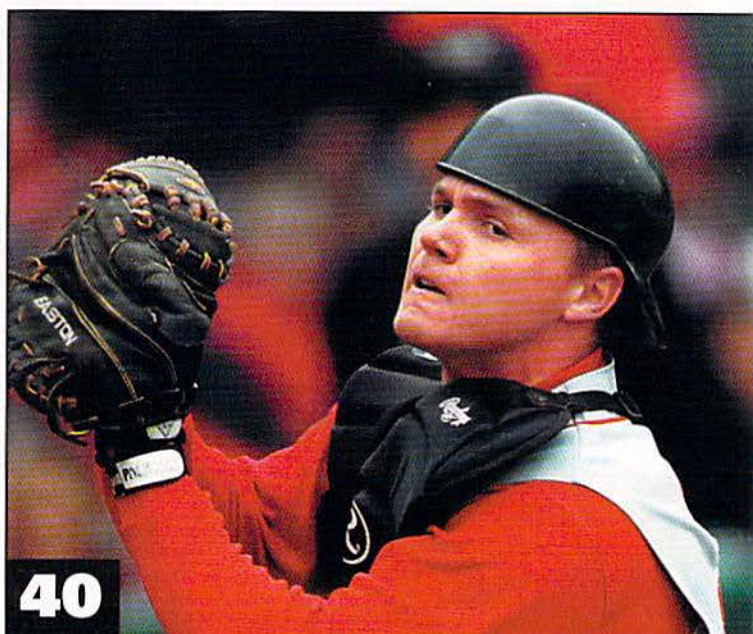
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Although the timing "wasn't easy," Frank Solich followed a plan. *By Mike Babcock*

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40 A Little Boost

Coach Dave Van Horn's harsh words provided a needed boost for catcher John Grose. *By Mike Babcock*

'Ready to Go'

Despite a 7-7 record, Nebraska's worst football season since 1961, the Cornhuskers haven't lost confidence. "Everybody's up-beat, ready to go now," quarterback Jammal Lord said on the day of pre-winter conditioning tests. "They know what it takes. Everybody sees it."

"Everybody, all the young guys, all the older guys, everybody, they know what it takes to get better, win a championship, a Big 12 championship, and to beat teams that beat us this year."

The team is focused and looking for "payback," he said.

Lord has seen that determination in the enthusiasm of receivers, who have approached him about working on the passing game. He has had no trouble getting players to catch his passes. He hasn't had to go looking, in fact. "They're trying to find me, so that's always a plus," he said.

Lord is working to improve his passing, after completing 95-of-204 for 1,362 yards and 12 touchdowns with 12 interceptions during his first season as the starter.

He is throwing to receivers whenever he has the opportunity, and he's even tossing a football in the air and catching it while sitting around at night, just to get the feel of it. "The small stuff, that's going to benefit me," the senior-to-be said, "just touching the ball, playing with it."

Lord has shown a unique ability to run with it, breaking the school single-season record for rushing yards by a quarterback, with 1,412 on 251 carries, an average of 5.6 yards per carry.

He broke that record before the Independence Bowl game.

On the strength of his running, he also broke the single-season record for total offense, with 2,774 yards. Eric Crouch held the previous record, 2,625 yards, which didn't include a bowl game.

Lord's 251 carries were more than one-third of the team's (724) and the most-ever by a Nebraska quarterback, as well as the most by any Cornhusker since Ahman Green's 278 in 1997. Add to that all of the times he was hit after pitching the ball or passing and Lord took a physical pounding.

As a result, he was 80 percent healthy, "give or take," he said, when the team tested in late January, in



Jammal Lord



Jemayel Phillips

preparation for six weeks of winter conditioning, beginning with lifting on Jan. 27. The team was scheduled to begin the running portion of the program on Feb. 10, with post-testing on March 12.

In any case, he was still a "little sore," Lord said, "nothing that ice can't take care of, or rest."

Despite the aches and pains, and the disappointing record, the season went quickly.

"It went fast. It went real fast," he said after testing. "You blinked and it was already K-State, blinked again and it was the bowl game, blinked and now we're here doing interviews."

Among the questions he'll answer a lot through spring practice is his estimation of the degree to which the offensive philosophy has changed under Barney Cotton, the new coordinator.

Cotton showed a tendency to throw more as offensive coordinator at New Mexico State.

"I don't mind (that)," said Lord. "It can only help us. It can't get worse. Hopefully, it will get better. Hopefully, I'll be more mature, more experienced, a better player, a better decision-maker."

As to the degree to which the offense will change, "I'm not sure right now what's going on, or how he's (Cotton) going to run this or run that. I just have to go in there and be prepared to fight for my job. It is my job until whoever takes it. I'm going to fight. I'm going to do what I've got to do."

Spring practice is a month away, however. Lord has the conditioning program first.

He didn't test particularly well, he said. "I did terrible, to tell you the truth. But there's always room for

improvement. It's a building block for the next time you test."

"You just try to improve, improve, improve."

Although he was impressed by several performances, including a 5.37-second 40-yard dash by 370-pound Jemayel Phillips, a redshirt freshman offensive lineman nicknamed "Big Smooth," Coach Frank Solich echoed Lord's words in assessing the pre-winter conditioning testing.

"It's not so much where they are right now," Solich said. "Really, we'll take a hard look at where they are at the end of conditioning, and we expect that there will be improvement made by most guys."

"I think every program understands how important the off-season is."

Football demands a year-round commitment, said Solich. "Traditionally, we've had excellent workouts in the off-season, and we expect that will be the case."

"It'll be demanding, and I think they'll work extremely hard."

Lord agrees. "Everybody's confident right now," he said.

PRE-WINTER CONDITIONING TEST RESULTS

Performance index points — Robin Miller, IB, 2,587; Shane Siegel, DB, 2,496; T.J. Hollowell, LB, 2,416; Curt Tomasevich, LB, 2,414; Dusty Stamer, WR, 2,395

10-yard dash — Stamer, 1.53 seconds; Miller, 1.54; Terrell Butler, DB, 1.55; Jared Franzluebbers, LB, 1.55; Mark LeFlore, WR, 1.55

10-yard dash points — Miller, 819 (1.54 seconds); Barrett Ruud, LB, 694 (1.63); Franzluebbers, 656 (1.55)

40-yard dash — Stamer, 4.49 seconds; Cole Biodrowski, DB, 4.55; Kade Pittman, WR, 4.58

40-yard dash points — Stamer 723 (4.49 seconds); Miller, 704 (4.68); Pittman, 704 (4.58)

Pro agility run — Mike McLaughlin, WR, 3.92 seconds; Seth Rexilius, WR, 3.96; Josh Bullocks, DB, 3.99; Blake Tiedtke, DB, 3.99

Pro agility run points — McLaughlin, 622 (3.92 seconds); Rexilius, 614 (3.96); Hollowell, 614 (4.05); Siegel, 614 (4.02)

Vertical jump — Biodrowski, 38 inches; Siegel, 37.5; Tomasevich, 37.5

Vertical jump points — Tomasevich, 696 (37.5 inches); Siegel, 688 (37.5); Biodrowski, 656 (38) ■

NO BLAND

Philip Bland was among those who didn't participate in the pre-winter conditioning tests, and the sophomore will miss spring practice following reconstructive shoulder surgery.

Bland, the starting rover, missed the Independence Bowl game because of a hamstring pull. But the right shoulder bothered him "as he finished the season," Coach Frank Solich said.

Since he isn't one to complain, when he did complain "a little bit about it, then you know there's probably a problem there that you'd better get to the bottom of," said Solich.

"In getting to the bottom of it, it became obvious surgery would help."

Bland was the Cornhuskers' leading tackler during the regular season, starting the first seven games at free safety and the last six at rover. He also started three games as a true freshman.



Philip Bland

"I think when you miss spring ball, it can be crucial," Solich said.

However, Bland "is a very smart player. He's a guy that's gotten a lot of experience at what he's done since he's been here because he's played so early. And that will all play in his favor."

"So I don't see where it's going to be a devastating blow to him or us. You always like to have everybody. But he'll be able to bounce back at this. When he does come back, it won't take him long because he always shows up and hits. He does the things you don't have to work on."

WELL REPRESENTED

Four former Cornhuskers were involved in the Tampa Bay Buccaneers' 48-21 victory over the Oakland Raiders in Super Bowl XXXVII. John Parrella was a co-captain and starter on the defensive line for the Raiders. Adam Treu started at center for them, and Eric Johnson scored their second touchdown, returning a blocked punt 13 yards less than a minute into the fourth quarter.

Monte Kiffin, who played at Nebraska in the early 1960s and was Tom Osborne's first defensive coordinator, probably had the most significant effect on the outcome, however.

Kiffin coordinates the Bucs' defense, which shut down the NFL's top-ranked offense.

Kiffin, by the way, recommended Bo Pelini when Solich set about finding a replacement for Craig Bohl as the Cornhuskers' defensive coordinator. Kiffin "threw one name forth," said Solich.

"That was Bo's name, and as I then continued to investigate what Bo Pelini was all about, it soon became obvious to me that he was the right guy for the job."

Kiffin's endorsement speaks well for Pelini. Even though he and Kiffin have never been on the same coaching staff, "we've spent a lot of time talking football," Pelini said. "We've been together a good amount."

"But as far as why he decided to recommend me, you'd have to ask Monte that. He's a good man. I feel great about that (recommendation) because to me, he's as good as there is."

The Oakland Raiders' offense wouldn't be able to argue about that. ■

QUICK HITS

What's Happening In Nebraska Athletics?

PAYING THE PRICE

None of the new assistants was more excited at the mid-January news conference to announce their hiring than Albin. He thanked Coach Frank Solich "for the opportunity to be here with the University of Nebraska basically (as) a full-time staffer. I've been here for the last three years," he said.

"So I don't really look at this as anything different. I'm not going to be a different person than what I've been the last three years. It's great. I'm just fired up and ready to go."

Also, he added, "I'm fired up about getting a paycheck, finally, for working."



Tim Albin

At the recently concluded coaches' convention in New Orleans, Albin had lunch with Barney Cotton, who would end up agreeing to become the Cornhuskers' new offensive coordinator.

"I picked up the tab," Albin said, eliciting more laughter.

"I'm looking forward to paying off that credit card."

He should have the wherewithal to do that. Based on figures released to the Lincoln Journal Star and Omaha World-Herald prior to the hiring of the final defensive assistant, their salaries were 21 percent higher than last season, with the average assistant's salary at \$128,125.

Reported base salaries:

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Bo Pelini, defensive coordinator | \$200,000 |
| Barney Cotton, offensive coordinator-offensive line | \$130,000 |
| Turner Gill, assistant head coach-quarterbacks | \$130,000 |
| Tim Albin, passing game coordinator-running backs | \$120,000 |
| Jeff Jamrog, special teams coordinator-defensive line | \$120,000 |
| Ron Brown, wide receivers | \$120,000 |
| Scott Downing, recruiting coordinator-tight ends | \$105,000 |
| Marvin Sanders, secondary | \$100,000 |
| Jimmy Williams, linebackers | \$100,000 |

In addition, Nebraska is paying the salaries of Craig Bohl, George Darlington, Milt Tenopir, Dan Young and Nelson Barnes through June of 2004. Their salaries total \$551,177.

Dave Gillespie, now the assistant athletic director for football, will continue to earn \$105,272. Solich, whose contract runs through 2005, has a base salary of \$321,260.

Athletic Director Steve Pederson said the salaries enable Nebraska to be competitive nationally.

ON THE ROAD

Even though new defensive coordinator Bo Pelini has spent the last nine years coaching in the National Football League, he didn't have difficulty recruiting. "It's no problem," he said. "If you can deal with people, it's not hard."

The adjustment was facilitated by the fact that "I had a good base before I got here as far as who they were looking at, and I got a chance to look at some guys," he said. "I've enjoyed it."

SOLID RESUME

Dan McLaughlin, a successful high school coach in Nebraska, has been hired as a graduate assistant, filling the role held by Tim Albin the last three seasons. Albin was promoted to full-time status as the running backs coach, succeeding Dave Gillespie, who is now an administrator.

The 47-year-old McLaughlin has been the head football coach at Omaha's Millard West since the school opened in 1995. His 2001 team won the state Class A championship.

He also coached Broken Bow (1987) and Norfolk (1994) to state titles.

He will assist offensive coordinator Barney Cotton in coaching the line.

LEADERSHIP

As always, leadership will be important, and Solich expects the 2003 senior class to provide it, beginning now. The seniors met prior to the start of the winter conditioning program, said Solich, and "established that they want to be an excellent group in terms of senior leadership."

Quarterback Jammal Lord, one of the seniors, said a season's experience has made a difference in his outlook and the outlooks of other seniors who saw significant action as juniors. "We weren't really young, but we weren't experienced enough," Lord said. "This year, we should be more experienced." ■

Addressing Needs

Nebraska's offense has been complex enough that few linemen have been able to play quickly



Mike BABCOCK

DARREN DELONE has "excellent movement," Frank Solich said in announcing his 2003 recruiting class. "He has the kind of movement necessary to run our style of offense."

The 6-foot-5, 320-pound lineman from Pomona, Calif., by way of Mount San Antonio Community College, "has the kind of movement necessary to run our style of offense. So he's the kind of player,

regardless of whether a need is there, that could come in and challenge," said Solich.

That DeLone can come in and challenge for playing time immediately says a good deal about the program and the direction it is taking following its worst season in 40 years.

Not since 1970 have the Cornhuskers recruited a junior college offensive lineman.

Bob Devaney brought in three in 1970, through the efforts of assistant Tom Osborne, who had been given the task of restructuring the offense following 6-4 records in 1967 and 1968.

Coincident with the restructuring was the rebuilding of the line and the recruiting of junior college linemen, Bob Newton in 1969, Dick Rupert, Keith Wortman and Carl Johnson in 1970.

Newton was a consensus All-America tackle on the 1970 national championship team, with Rupert starting at guard and Wortman and Johnson backing up at guard and tackle.

Rupert, Johnson and Wortman were the foundation of the 1971 line, with Rupert and Johnson earning first-team, all-conference recognition and Wortman receiving honorable mention.

Wortman and Newton both went on to play 10 seasons in the NFL.

Despite the success of those four, Nebraska hasn't recruited another junior college offensive lineman until now. And that probably has been by design rather than by chance.

Over the last 30 years or so, Nebraska's offense has been complex enough that few linemen have been able to play quickly. Most have redshirted, to learn the system and mature physically.

There have been exceptions, of course. The late Jake Young, Will Shields and Tionu Fonoti all played as true freshmen, and went on to earn consensus All-America recognition. But when you consider that the NCAA restored freshman eligibility in 1972, the number is insignificant.

Junior college linemen would have had the physical

maturity to play right away. But they still would have had to learn the system, with only three years to play two in most cases.

Limited eligibility is a negative in recruiting junior college players at any position because "you get in a cycle of continually having to bring a number of junior college players in," said Solich.

"Whether we'll be able to avoid that in the future, time will tell."

Indications are, Nebraska won't be able to avoid that. With the NCAA's 85-scholarship limit, and to a lesser extent the possibility that a few players — most recently Fonoti and Dominic Raiola — will leave early for the NFL, "you're going to have to always be faced with addressing needs," he said.

Junior colleges offer a way to address those needs.

Solich acknowledged as much in restructuring his staff, a fact reflected in his choice of Barney Cotton to replace him as offensive coordinator as well as coach the offensive line.

New graduate assistant Dan McLaughlin will help Cotton with the offensive line, as will new tight ends coach Scott Downing. But Cotton will be the only full-time assistant assigned to the offensive line, "which is different for us at the University of Nebraska," Solich said, understating.

The last time the Cornhuskers had only one full-time offensive line coach was in 1968.

The change doesn't diminish the importance of line play to the success of the offense. Cotton "in some ways will bring some simplicity to our system to where we'll continue to work at trying to get young players on the field," said Solich. "I think that's extremely important in this day and age."

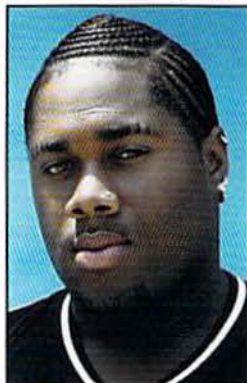
Cotton plans to simplify the offense. "The number of schemes you have is where you get complicated," he said. "If we can package some schemes together and do some things out of the same schemes, we can get complexities out of formations and shifts and motions."

Those things can be done "without having a large number of blocking schemes."

Offensive linemen will still have to master a good deal in order to play. But in the line as well as elsewhere, "you need to have your best players on the field," Solich said.

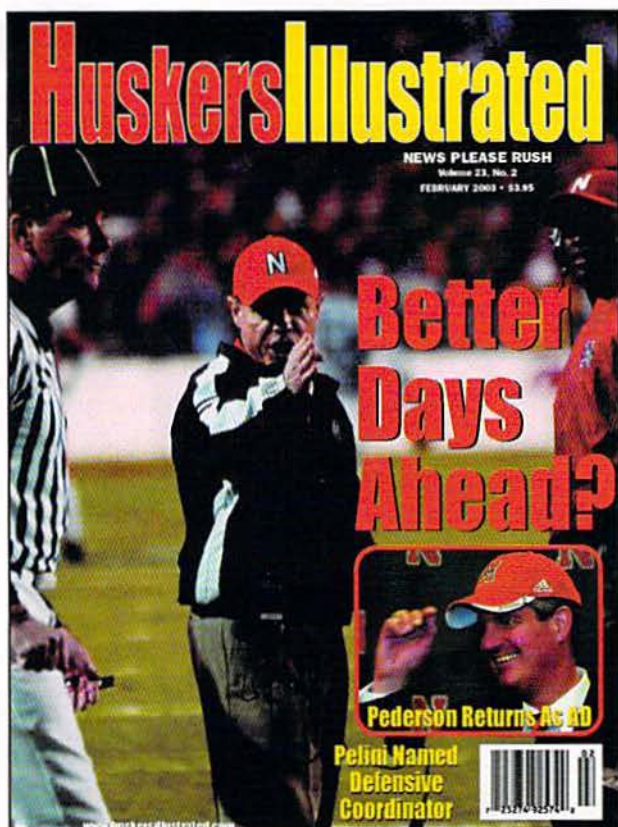
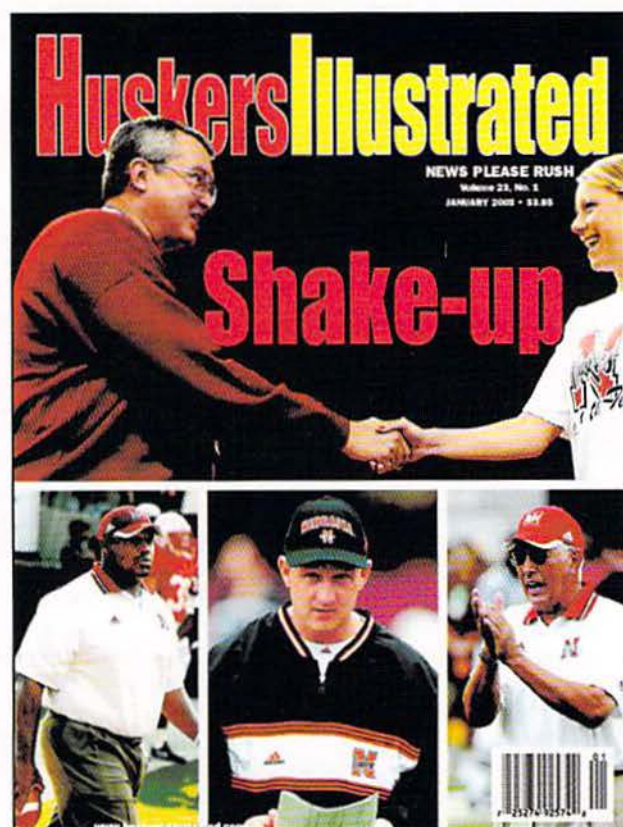
And those players, including linemen, could come from junior colleges.

DeLone is one of those. "There's no question that he's the kind of player size-wise and strength-wise that can get it done for you in the offensive line," said Solich. And he'll have a chance. ■



Junior college transfer Darren DeLone is one of four line recruits.

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... On Your Favorite Team

Golden Voice

Husker PA announcer Schwieger moving on to racing opportunity



Terry DOUGLASS

AFTER NINE SEASONS as the public address announcer at Memorial Stadium, Rick Schwieger and his signature touchdown call of "scoorring for the Huskers" are moving on.

Schwieger's ear-pleasing pipes now have him traveling the country as a TV host for NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series racing on Speed Channel. The 33-year-old Grand Island native, perhaps best known in Nebraska as the PA voice for the Cornhusker football and men's basketball teams, signed a two-year contract and made his network debut Feb. 14 — using his on-air name of Rick Allen — in the Florida Dodge Dealers 250 at Daytona.

"The opportunities that are being presented to me and the opportunities that could happen are kind of in my hands now depending on how I do," said Schwieger, who will still live in Lincoln but must quit his fund-raising duties at NU. "I guess you could say that the ball is in my court."

Schwieger's duties include pre- and post-race coverage as well as calling the races from the booth's

Schwieger's first chance to do the football PA came at the 1994 Red-White spring game. Soon after, he was offered the job and never missed working a Husker home contest.

The story behind Schwieger's trademark phrase when Nebraska scored a touchdown is that there really is no story. Initially, Schwieger decided to steer away from the idea of a signature touchdown call, but one developed anyway.

"For some reason, it just evolved," Schwieger said. "It really wasn't that big of a deal. I guess I just hold 'scoring' a little bit longer than any other words, but I'm not sure if anybody ever hears me because that's when everybody is screaming their loudest."

Schwieger always considered the announcing booth as a working area. Just like in the press box, cheering wasn't allowed.

However, Schwieger said that rule was overlooked once — during the 2001 Nebraska-Oklahoma game when Eric Crouch scored on the reverse pass from Mike Stuntz to help seal a 20-10 win over Oklahoma and create perhaps Schwieger's most memorable moment working Husker athletics.

"That was fun," Schwieger said. "There was so much emotion and so much adrenaline going on and that just kind of made everything explode right then. I just kind of sat back and smiled and thought, 'Let's just let everybody enjoy and have fun with it.'"

Schwieger's talent was discovered at Nebraska while he was still competing in track and field. As a joke, Schwieger made some announcements over the loudspeakers at an NU track meet and was later asked to fill in at a Husker gymnastics competition by someone who had heard him that day.

Schwieger was just glad to help out, but apparently

impressed more people with his ability. Nebraska Sports Information Director Chris Anderson asked Schwieger if he wanted to do baseball games and eventually, he wound up being the PA man for several Husker sports.

Schwieger was actively involved in vocal music at Grand Island Northwest but really had never planned on using his voice to make a living. He does recall a few teachers who told him that he should consider broadcasting because he had a radio voice, however.

"I have never really thought of myself having a different voice than anybody else — it's just my voice," Schwieger said. "Now, when I go into a radio station or do a spot or something like that, everybody is always kidding me saying things like, 'Oh, the golden voice or the million dollar voice.'"

"I just laugh because, luckily, I was just born with it. I didn't have anything to do with it."

Schwieger's journey to Fox Sports' Speed Channel was helped by what he's done at Nebraska, but actually started in 1996 when he started announcing dirt track racing at Eagle. NASCAR official Tom Deery liked what he heard from Schwieger and told Eagle track promoter Craig Cormack that Schwieger should send a demo tape to Fox Sports.

Schwieger didn't have a demo, but assembled a few on-camera pieces he had done for Husker Vision as well as a commercial with Tom Osborne and Barry Switzer. The tape wasn't more than a minute in length but was apparently good enough.

About a week later, he got an invitation from an executive producer from Fox Sports to fly to Charlotte, N.C., to audition for a NASCAR Trucks spot as a pre-race show host or a play-by-play announcer. Schwieger didn't get either job, but may have set the groundwork for getting hired later.

During his audition, Schwieger said he "really hit it off" with famed NASCAR star Darrell Waltrip.

However, Schwieger didn't hear another word from Fox Sports for two years. Finally, early last year the network asked him to audition once again. Last August, Schwieger got a phone call from Fox Sports chairman David Hill.

Schwieger was sent to another audition where he called a race on videotape with other potential members of an announcing team and was later offered the job. He accepted.

Although he considers his new job an excellent opportunity, Schwieger said the move didn't come without hesitation.

"The situation that I have at Nebraska is really unique," said Schwieger, who was a three-time All-American in the decathlon for the Cornhuskers and a 1992 Nebraska graduate. "I've grown up here, I was an athlete here, I've gone through the system and I've done about every job you can do here."

"I really consider this my family. Everybody here, I love. I think these people here are all great, so it was very difficult to think about leaving that atmosphere." ■



Rick Schwieger was an All-American in the decathlon at Nebraska.

Terry Douglass is the sports editor of the Grand Island Independent. He can be reached at tdbdouglass@netzero.net.

Necessary Ingredients

Van Horn, Komine have moved on, but Huskers optimistic entering season



Curt McKEEVER

DAVE VAN HORN is at Arkansas. Shane Komine is pitching in the Oakland Athletics organization.

Yeah, you probably should be questioning what's going to happen with Nebraska baseball. Even first-year Coach Mike Anderson, who spent eight seasons as a Husker assistant before being named to replace Van Horn, can understand that thinking.

If not for Van Horn and the three-time All-American pitcher Komine, NU isn't where it is now, coming off back-to-back appearances in the College World Series.

"We're planning on bringing Shane back for his fifth year," kidded Anderson, during a preseason Big 12 coaches teleconference. "I love Coach Van Horn, but I'd rather have Shane back right now."

That noted, Anderson is sounding more and more like he believes Nebraska — ranked as high as No. 19 in the preseason — will be just fine.

"Kids move on," he added. "There's not a day where we sit and think, 'Well, we've lost Shane.' He's an integral part of the past, but he's not in the future."

And the league's coaches are still penciling a bright one for NU. In their preseason poll, the coaches picked the Huskers to finish in a tie for fourth.

Defending national champion Texas was the unanimous choice to win the Big 12. Only because coaches couldn't vote for their own team, Oklahoma received one of the 10 first-place votes.

Baylor and Oklahoma also were picked ahead of Nebraska, which shared fourth place with Texas Tech.

Oklahoma State Coach Tom Holliday, whose club was chosen sixth, said he'd be surprised if the Huskers drop too far off the level they reached under Van Horn. In his last four years, he guided NU to three league tournament titles and a runner-up spot. The Huskers also won the 2001 regular-season crown and finished second last season and in 2000.

"They have talent. That was not a program that was left empty," Holliday said. "You're talking about a club coming off a trip to the World Series, so I think Mike's inherited a good situation."

Holliday did acknowledge that a player like Komine put the Huskers in position to compete for a national title.

"He brought anxiety levels up to where some people couldn't compete with him," Holliday said.

But he also believes the Huskers will be OK as long as they play with the same confidence as when they had Komine.

"They'll feel the loss of him probably more as an attitude," he said.

As for the absence of Van Horn, no one will be happier to see Nebraska this season than Oklahoma Coach Larry Cochell. During Van Horn's five years in Lincoln, Cochell's teams went

3-15 against NU.

"Coach Van Horn did more than a lot of thought us he could in a short period of time. He, obviously, left his mark on the program," Cochell said. But "Mike Anderson, having been there awhile, has the ability to carry on what he started."

Anderson and associate head coach Rob Childress have obviously put their fingerprints on the Huskers' program. Under Van Horn, Anderson handled the outfielders and was the hitting instructor, and Childress coached the pitchers.

As they were making final preparations for the season-opening Express College Classic in Round Rock, Texas, both sounded extremely optimistic that NU had the right ingredients to produce another big winner.

Nebraska returns its entire starting outfield, shortstop Joe Simokaitis, catcher John Grose, and eventually will have first baseman Matt Hopper, once he fully recovers from four off-season surgeries.

The Huskers began the season with first-time starters at first, second and third base.

While Jake Mullinax moved quickly to secure second after transferring to NU in between semesters, there's plenty of competition at the corner infield positions.

At first, Curtis Ledbetter, a transfer from Garden City (Kan.) Community College who red-shirted last season, and Joe Gullion, a highly sought-after athlete from Johnson County (Kan.) Community College, will start off sharing time.

At third, Anderson said the battle between Chase Odenreider and Alex Gordon is so even that the two newcomers might end up alternating all season. The right-handed hitting Odenreider is a redshirt freshman from Millard North. Gordon, a left-handed swinger, is a true freshman from Lincoln Southeast.

"Those two kids, defensively, the last four months have been great for them," Anderson said. "They've just worked their tails off and gotten better."

Nebraska's outfield of Daniel Bruce, Jeff Leise and Drew Anderson will be one of the best in the Big 12. Anderson also has been impressed with Brandon Fusilier. When the transfer from Navarro (Texas) College isn't playing the field, he'll likely be the designated hitter.

"Rob, Andy (Sawyers) and I have probably written 150 different lineups," Anderson said. "That's something baseball coaches do. I told our guys the other day, 'You may be sitting in the eight-hole and unfortunately go 0-for-5 and we win. Well, we won, so you might be in the eight-hole again the next day, even though you didn't perform well.' That lineup won."

"We'll find the right lineups. I've never experienced it where you just say, 'I know exactly what this is going to be.' You've got to play games and tinker with them." ■



Mike Anderson spent eight seasons as a Husker assistant.

Curt McKeever is a sportswriter, covering the University of Nebraska for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football he is the primary beat writer for the men's basketball and baseball teams.

Class Come

Solich calls 2003 recruiting class 'a great group,' considering the circumstances

By Mike Babcock

A couple of days before letters of intent could be signed, Lance Broadus changed his mind about Nebraska. The linebacker from Woodland Hills, Calif., opted for Oregon instead.

Lose one, gain three. Like Broadus, Joe Dailey, Chris Patrick and Ryan Schuler had changes of heart, signing with the Cornhuskers after making oral commitments to other schools.

Dailey had been headed to Syracuse, Patrick to Purdue and Schuler to Oklahoma.

Those three joined 13 other high school athletes and three junior college players in a scholarship recruiting class that covered "the needs that we set out to cover," Coach Frank Solich said.

"We're really satisfied with the way recruiting went, especially when it came down to having to make some coaching changes and transitions in the middle of the recruiting process."

Considering the circumstances, "we think it's a great group," he said.

With a restructured staff, including six new assistant coaches, coming on the heels of a 7-7 season, Nebraska's worst in 40 years, there was reason for concern. But the Cornhuskers received a half-dozen



Quarterback recruit Joe Dailey passed for 1,378 yards and 19 touchdowns as a senior at St. Peter's Prep in Jersey City, N.J.

oral commitments after Solich announced five of the new assistants in mid-January.

And Broadus was the only defecation during that time.

The high school players were divided evenly, with seven listed on offense, seven listed on defense, one

listed as either-or and one kicker, David Dyches — one of six in the class from Texas. "We worked very hard at establishing a good recruiting class in Texas this year," said Solich. "It paid off."

Dyches' signing was announced a day later, after Mike Jenkins, a

es Together



Rush end Chris Patrick had 102 tackles as a senior at Ithaca, Mich.

defensive back from Bradenton, Fla., picked South Florida. Had Jenkins signed, Dyches would have waited for a scholarship.

The offensive players out of high school are: Dailey, a quarterback, linemen Greg Austin, Brett Byford and Schuler; tight ends Josh Mueller

and J.B. Phillips and split end Andy Birkel.

The defensive players are: Patrick, a rush end, cornerbacks Titus Brothers and Adrain Turner, free safety Steve Craver, linebackers Corey McKeon and Bo Ruud and tackle Brandon Teamer.

McKeon could play on either the weakside or the strongside, while Ruud, whose brother Barrett is the returning starter at middle linebacker, will play the strongside, according to Solich.

Ruud isn't the only member of this year's recruiting class following a brother to Nebraska. Craver is the younger brother of former Cornhusker All-American Keyuo Craver.

Steve Craver is "probably bigger than Keyuo, probably a little faster than Keyuo, (and) a big hitter," Solich said. "We hope he has the kind of career Keyuo had."

Tierre Green, the cousin of former Cornhusker Ahman Green, is listed as an athlete. He "will most likely be a running back," said Solich. But he could end up playing defense.

"We're really satisfied with the way recruiting went, especially when it came down to having to make some coaching changes and transitions in the middle of the recruiting process."

— Frank Solich

The junior college transfers — the most Nebraska has taken since 1991 — are offensive lineman Darren DeLone, rush end Wali Muhammad and cornerback Donald DeFrاند.

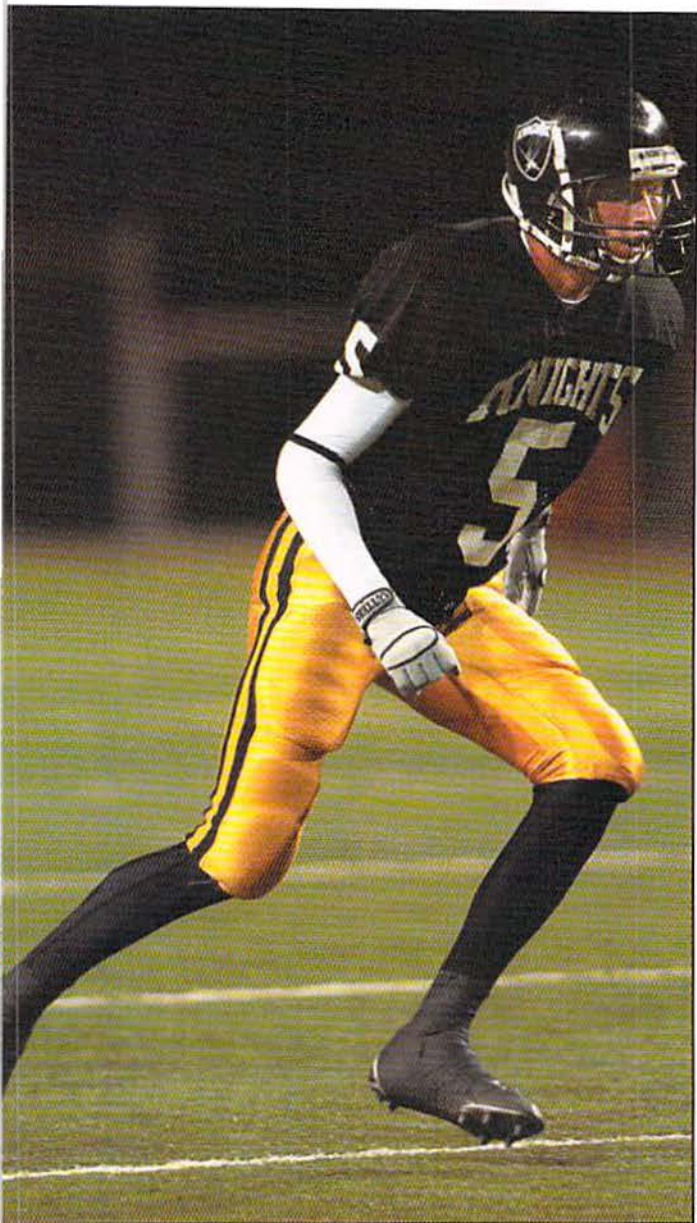
All three transfers — who will enroll in the fall — could have an immediate impact. "When you go the junior college route, it's generally because you're addressing needs," Solich said.

"But you can also go for a great player . . . guys that are going to be difference-makers, that are going to line up and get it done big-time. I think when you look at junior college players, you're looking at guys that are pretty much complete players. And then if they fit the need, so much the better."

Demorrio Williams was such a player. The Cornhuskers' only junior college transfer a year ago, quickly worked his way up the depth chart and became a starter at weakside linebacker.

The high school recruits could fill immediate needs, too.

At defensive back, for example, "we wanted to make sure that we got



Split end Andy Birkel (left) and linebacker Bo Ruud were teammates on Lincoln Southeast's 2002 Class A state championship team. The Knights finished 12-1.

some good young players who would be able to vie for playing time right upon stepping on campus," said Solich.

That isn't limited to the secondary. "We did not promise anyone that they would step in and take over a position," he said. But "there are going to be players in this class that will play."

Some might even start, he said, adding that all of the recruits were made to understand that they would be given "every opportunity" to play and to challenge for starting positions.

Four true freshmen played in 2000: Willie Amos, T.J. Hollowell, Benard Thomas and Terrell Butler.

Four played in 2001: Mike Stuntz, Philip Bland, Barrett Ruud and Manaia Brown. And five played last season: Fabian Washington, Ross Pilkington, Matt Herian, Mark LeFlore and David Horne.

"I would imagine this class will bring forward about the same," Solich said.

"About four or five (true freshmen) guys will have a chance to step on the field."

Add the three junior college transfers to those four or five and the Cornhuskers could have a significant number of newcomers on the field next season. "There are needs, certainly, at some positions that will give some guys a little better shot,"

said Solich.

Cornerback is such as position, as are tight end and rush end.

However, experience at a position doesn't necessarily preclude a newcomer playing. Like everyone else, Dailey could play without redshirting, even though he is a quarterback.

"We'll find out," Solich said. "We're going to give Joe every opportunity."

Dailey "is a combination runner and thrower," he said. "That's one thing we set out to do this year, make sure we had a great combination guy. We wanted a guy that could still run the option, still be a part of a power running game but could throw well. Joe completed over 60

percent of his passes."

The 6-foot-1, 200-pound Dailey completed 74-of-136 passes for 1,378 yards and 19 touchdowns during his senior season. He rushed for 783 yards and 13 touchdowns.

He is a "big, physical quarterback," said Solich.

Freshmen Trevor Neeman, Kade Pittman and Ronnie Smith, all of whom are enrolled and will participate in spring practice, bring the total to 22, filling the available scholarships.

Neeman and Pittman committed last season but didn't sign letters of intent. Smith signed but delayed his enrollment in order to gain weight, get stronger and "work on academics," said Solich.

Neeman, a rush end-tight end, is from Lincoln, Neb. Pittman, a defensive back-running back, is from North Platte, Neb. And Smith, a wingback and kick returner, is from Carson, Calif.

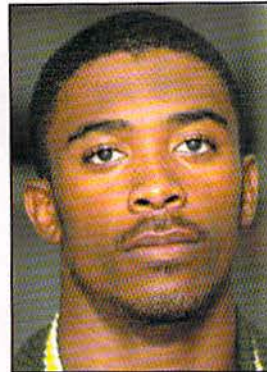
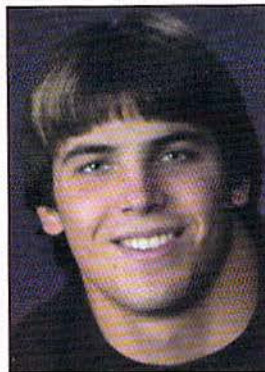
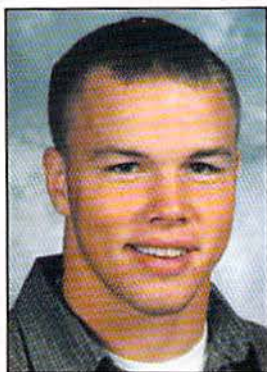
Although some of the high school players, whom he wouldn't identify, "have to get some work done and will have to have an excellent semester," Solich said, "there's a chance for every one of them to be qualifiers. There is no one here that automatically needs to go a junior college route.

"I feel very good about where the vast majority of these players are academically."

In retrospect, the Cornhuskers' problems this season, and the resulting staff shakeup, might not have affected recruiting that much. "We probably did not get as much feedback as what you'd expect," said Solich. "You always expect that, hey, they're out there, they've seen every loss, they're suffering with you through every loss. But that's not the way it works for high school athletes.

"They know about great programs. They know about great traditions. So what they're all about is coming to a program where they're comfortable in terms of the people in that program."

Those people include players as well as coaches, he said. "Then if you do have a history of taking care of players academically, if you do have a history of taking care of players and maximizing their potential athletically, you're going to have a great



Freshmen (from left) Trevor Neeman, Kade Pittman and Ronnie Smith are enrolled and will participate in spring practice.

shot to get great players in the system."

The evidence would seem to sup-

port what he said.

Four players changed their minds, three in Nebraska's favor. ■



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Work in Texas Pays Dividends

Lone Star State produces six of Nebraska's 19 2003 recruits

By Doug Horwich

Texas has long been recognized as one of the most talent-rich football states in the country on an annual basis.

Despite the state's large number of Division I schools, including Big 12 Conference powers Texas and Texas A&M, the state still produces enough talent that schools from all over the country look there for a substantial percentage of their recruiting class.

Such was the case this year for Nebraska, which signed six players from Texas. Considering that the 2003 Husker class totals only 19 players, and that only five of those players are from Nebraska, this is quite remarkable. In fact, it's the largest number of Texans signed in a single Husker class in 13 years.

The Longhorns and Aggies cumulatively signed 42 prospects this year — all from Texas. Yet, despite this blitzkrieg on in-state talent, the two schools left a much greater number of talented prospects behind than they took for themselves. Much like hyenas descend upon a carcass that a pack of lions has left behind, Nebraska and other schools found plenty of unclaimed talent that the two in-state Big 12 powers simply didn't have room for.

One alleged benefit of Nebraska joining the Big 12 Conference in 1996 was the publicity and exposure that the team would get each Saturday in



David Dyches of Spring, Texas, with Coach Ron Lynch, was one of three Husker recruits selected to play in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl in San Antonio in January. Dyches kicked a 42-yard field goal in the game.

the millions of living rooms throughout Texas. However, while the Huskers have managed to sign a steady flow of Texans since the formation of the conference, the team has never really mounted a full-scale assault on the state from a recruiting perspective — until this year.

The first Texan to pledge his commitment to Nebraska was Hurst L.D. Bell free safety Steve Craver (6-foot-2, 195 pounds, 4.5-second 40-yard dash). Craver is the younger brother of former Husker standout Keyuo Craver, and made his intentions known in the summer of 2002 prior to the start of his senior season.

"I like to win, and I can't lose by coming to Nebraska," he said. "Keyuo told me how well he was treated and how great of an experi-

ence he had there. I like the family environment up there. I don't feel any pressure following Keyuo, but I am looking forward to keeping the family name going at Nebraska."

Craver saw his brother have a great deal of success and grow as a cornerback at Nebraska. Keyuo eventually was selected in the fourth round of the 2002 NFL Draft by the New Orleans Saints.

The younger Craver is already bigger, faster and stronger than his brother was at Nebraska, and he hopes to equal — if not surpass — Keyuo's achievements.

One potential hurdle for Craver to overcome is the issue of academic qualification. Although his academic status is likely to improve with test retakes and solid performance in the classroom over the final semester, Craver may have to sit out a year and enroll in January of 2004 when NCAA qualification requirements are eased slightly.

Shortly after Craver's commitment, the Husker staff received a pledge from Cypress Cy-Fair offensive lineman Greg Austin (6-2, 290, 5.3). Austin attended Nebraska's Big Red Football School over the summer and received a written offer from the Husker staff. He accepted immediately and became the second Texan to join the 2003 class.

Austin is a player who went through a radical physical transformation following his junior year of high school, and as a result, he wasn't really on the radar of most top programs. By the time he was discovered at Nebraska's summer camp, the Huskers already had him locked up. The early commitment caused recruiting analysts to largely ignore him, but his performance on the field spoke for itself.

Much like 2002 offensive guard prospect Jermaine Leslie, who was

also ignored by the top Texas programs, Austin is a short and powerful lineman in the mold of former Huskers Will Shields and Aaron Taylor. At roughly 6-2, he uses power and leverage to dominate in the trenches and knock defenders to the ground.

Leslie had an outstanding redshirt year on the Husker scout team and figures to play substantially as a freshman. Nebraska coaches hope that Austin will follow a similar path.

After visiting the Husker campus in late-November, Terrell High School cornerback Adrain Turner (5-10, 185, 4.49) briefly considered Louisiana Tech, TCU and Baylor before becoming the third Texan to commit to Nebraska. The confident Turner fully expects to play as a true freshman and intends to arrive early to get a head start.

"I'm moving to Lincoln the first or second week in June," he said. "I'll be enrolling then and starting class as well as working out."

The Texas floodgates really opened in late January when Nebraska coaches received back-to-back commitments from Colleyville Heritage tight end J.B. Phillips (6-3, 250, 4.67) and Converse Judson cornerback Titus Brothers (5-11, 190, 4.5) in a span of only two days.

Phillips visited Lincoln in mid-December, while Brothers visited in mid-January. Both players were impressed by the new members of the Husker coaching staff and decided that Lincoln was where they wanted to be.

For Phillips, the opportunity to play for a prestigious Big 12 program like Nebraska was too good to pass up.

"I just followed gut feeling," he said. "I've had this gut feeling for a while, and it's been telling me Nebraska for some time. Coach (Scott) Downing just answered the last questions that I had, and from there it was an easy pick. All the schools were great, but Nebraska just was what I was feeling all along."

Brothers had been considering the Huskers along with Texas Christian and Arkansas, but decided that the opportunity for early playing time at a big-time program like Nebraska was the right decision for him.

"Honestly, I knew after I took my visit that Nebraska was the right fit for me," he said. "I really didn't even

Changes of Heart Benefit Huskers

By Rick Shaw

In the past, the Nebraska football program has always been fortunate to find athletes who were smitten with the Cornhuskers since childhood . . . athletes who had Nebraska No. 1 in their hearts from the very beginning of the recruiting process.

Though many Husker signees in the recruiting class of 2003 fit that description, three difference-makers signed with NU after being previously committed to other schools. The commitments of quarterback Joe Dailey, offensive tackle Ryan Schuler and rush end Chris Patrick added a bit of luster to an already solid class of recruits.

— The 6-foot-1, 200-pound Dailey out of Saint Peter's Prep School in Jersey City, N.J., committed to Syracuse on June 28, after entertaining offers from Rutgers, Virginia Tech, and Virginia. Despite his commitment, the fleet-footed Dailey expressed a desire to take an official visit to Nebraska in December.

After his visit to Lincoln, Dailey was admittedly torn between his earlier commitment to Syracuse and Nebraska. A strong relationship with Nebraska assistant coach Turner Gill and an all-around "gut feeling" led Dailey to reverse allegiance and sign with the Huskers.

"I didn't get a real good feeling when I took my visit to Syracuse," Dailey said. "My visit to Nebraska went great. I was able to meet quarterbacks coach Turner Gill, and I really like him. In the end, my gut told me that Nebraska is where I'd be more comfortable."

Dailey was ranked the No. 13 dual-threat quarterback in the country by Rivals.com. He passed for more than 1,400 yards and added more than 800 on the ground as a senior.

— Schuler was one of the most highly coveted offensive linemen in the country. The 6-7, 270-pound lineman from Washington High School in Sioux Falls, S.D., garnered scholarship offers from Colorado, Iowa, Stanford, Oregon, Nebraska and Wisconsin and several others. However, in a bit of a recruiting surprise, Schuler committed to Oklahoma in mid-August.

Despite being committed to the Sooners, Schuler decided to take winter visits to Iowa, Colorado, and Nebraska to make absolutely sure that Norman, Okla., is where he wanted to spend his college days.

His visit to Lincoln in January convinced Schuler, rated as the nation's 14th best offensive tackle by Rivals, that he may have acted a bit suddenly in pledging to Oklahoma last summer. In a pleasant turn of events for Nebraska coaches and fans alike, Schuler decommitted from Oklahoma and committed to Nebraska on Jan. 29.

— Chris Patrick, a defensive end from Ithaca, Mich., was a previous commit to both Wisconsin and Purdue. However, in the end, the 6-6, 245-pound standout found that a chance to line up with the Blackshirts in Lincoln was just too good to pass up.

"I've always been a Nebraska fan," Patrick said. "I have a lot of family from that area. After my visit to Lincoln, I knew I was finally done."

Patrick, who was rated the nation's No. 13 weakside defensive end by Rivals, registered 7 sacks and 95 total tackles as a senior. ■

Goals



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need the coaches to come in and talk to me. I got a chance to meet defensive backs coach Marvin Sanders, and he seems like a good coach. He is confident of the things he is doing.

"I wasn't sure that Nebraska is where I was going until I came home and evaluated things. My decision pointed to Nebraska."

The sixth piece of the Texas puzzle was also the final commitment of the 2003 recruiting class.

Place-kicker David Dyches (6-1, 185, 4.79) from Westfield High School in Spring, Texas, gave his commitment to the Husker staff on Feb. 4 — the day before signing day. However, the staff told him that they wouldn't know whether or not they had room for him until they received word of

defensive back Mike Jenkins' decision on signing day.

Jenkins ended up signing with the University of South Florida, leaving a spot open for Dyches, who would have otherwise delayed full-time enrollment until January of 2004.

Dyches was considered to be one of the top kickers in the high school ranks last year and was a starter in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl in January, where he kicked a 42-yard field goal. He will compete for the starting position at Nebraska in fall camp.

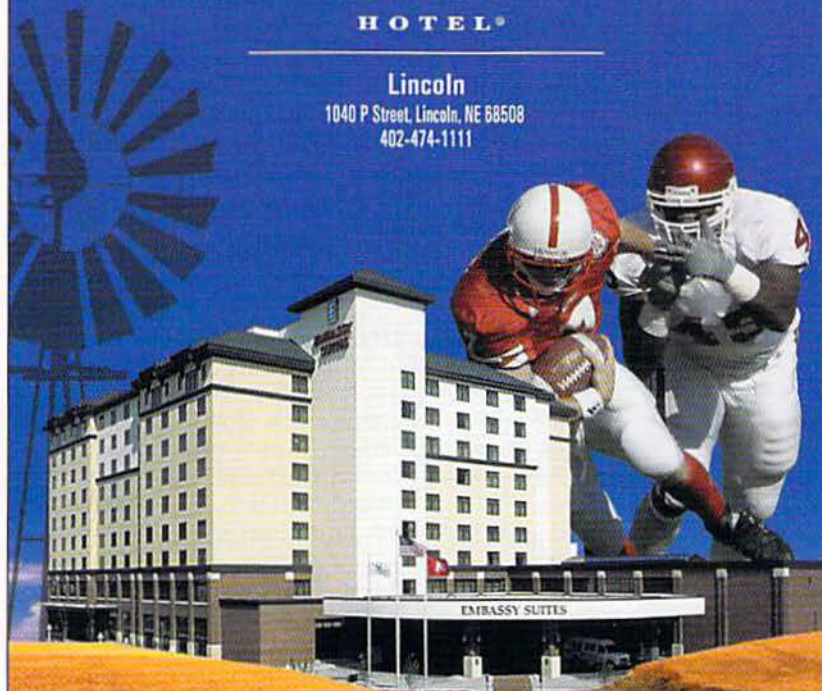
Texas recruiting was a focal point of Nebraska's 2003 class, and it's likely that the state will continue to play a major role in the Huskers' recruiting plans for years to come. ■

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2003 Husker Football Signees

| Player, hometown (school) | Ht. | Wt. | Pos. |
|---|------|-----|------|
| Greg Austin, Cypress, Texas (Cy-Fair) | 6-2 | 290 | OL |
| Andy Birkel, Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast) | 6-3 | 175 | SE |
| Titus Brothers, Converse, Texas (Judson) | 5-11 | 190 | DB |
| Brett Byford, Hartselle, Ala. | 6-4 | 290 | OL |
| Steve Craver, Hurst, Texas (L.D. Bell) | 6-2 | 195 | FS |
| Joe Dailey, Jersey City, N.J. (St. Peter's) | 6-1 | 200 | QB |
| Donald DeFrاند, Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (Stranahan)/Dodge City (Kan.) CC | 6-2 | 180 | CB |
| Darren DeLone, Pomona, Calif. (Garey)/ Mt. San Antonio (Calif.) CC | 6-5 | 320 | OL |
| David Dyches, Spring, Texas (Westfield) | 6-1 | 185 | PK |
| Tierre Green, Omaha, Neb. (Benson) | 6-1 | 195 | ATH |
| Corey McKeon, Naperville, Ill. (North) | 6-2 | 215 | LB |
| Josh Mueller, Columbus, Neb. (Lakeview) | 6-6 | 250 | TE |
| Wali Muhammad, Bloomfield, N.J./ Coffeyville (Kan.) CC | 6-2 | 245 | RE |
| Chris Patrick, Ithaca, Mich. | 6-6 | 245 | RE |
| J.B. Phillips, Colleyville, Texas (Heritage) | 6-3 | 250 | TE |
| Bo Ruud, Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast) | 6-3 | 210 | LB |
| Ryan Schuler, Sioux Falls, S.D. (Washington) | 6-7 | 270 | OT |
| Brandon Teamer, Omaha, Neb. (Central) | 6-5 | 265 | DT |
| Adrain Turner, Terrell, Texas | 5-10 | 185 | DB |

**Capsules
compiled by
Doug Horwich
and Rick Shaw**



**Greg
Austin**

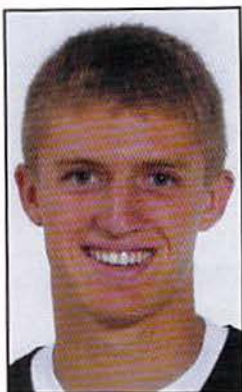
**Offensive Lineman
Cypress, Texas
(Cy-Fair)
Height: 6-2
Weight: 290
Speed: 5.5
DOB: Nov. 19,
1984**

BIO: Austin is an aggressive and powerful offensive guard prospect from Class 5-A Cy-Fair in Cypress, Tex. Playing in the state's largest class, he starred on a team that finished with a 7-4 record and went to the playoffs. Despite missing half of the season with a foot injury, Austin earned honorable-mention all-district honors as an offensive guard. Relatively unknown prior to last summer, he was discovered at Nebraska's football camp, where he displayed outstanding athletic ability and physical dominance. Austin is already fairly well-developed physically, with a 400-pound bench press and 520-pound squat. Physically, he's in the mold of former Husker guards Aaron Taylor and Will Shields, as well as current Husker Jermaine Leslie. Austin has a "decleater" mentality on the football field and does a good job of using power and leverage to put defenders on the ground. In addition to Nebraska, he was also recruited by LSU, Rice and North Texas. However, Austin only visited Lincoln and committed to the Huskers in mid-July. He was rated as a two-star prospect by Rivals.com.

WHY GREG CHOSE NEBRASKA: "It's a once in a lifetime opportunity for any high school football player to play at Nebraska. My recruiting coach was Coach Ron Brown. He's just a really nice coach and a great guy! My family is based around God and our faith and my parents think that Coach Brown would be a good spiritual leader and good coach for me."

CY-FAIR COACH RONNY PEACOCK: "Greg has great feet, and he's quick. He's very strong and he's a very good blocker. He'll get after you. Greg is also a good student and he's been a great leader for us the past two years."

PARENTS: Greg Sr. and Jacqueline Austin



Andy Birkel

Split End
Lincoln, Neb.
(Southeast)
Height: 6-3
Weight: 175
Speed: 4.69
DOB: Jan. 30,
1985

BIO: Birkel is a speedy wide receiver who starred on both sides of the football last year for state power Lincoln Southeast. As a junior at Lincoln East High School, Birkel caught 14 passes for 329 yards and five touchdowns and also registered 67 tackles and five interceptions. However, he transferred to Southeast prior to the start of his senior season and recorded 31 receptions for 747 yards, with a 24-yards-per-catch average and 10 touchdowns. As a cornerback he registered 38 tackles and two interceptions. Birkel's contributions helped lead Southeast to a 12-1 record and the Class A state championship last year. His play also earned him All-Nebraska and First-Team Class A honors from the Omaha World-Herald and Super-State honors from the Lincoln Journal Star. Birkel committed to Nebraska shortly after attending Husker football camp last summer where he recorded a Performance Index score of 1,969 points — the third highest score at the camp. Birkel also considered offers from Kansas State and Iowa. He was rated as a three-star prospect by Rivals.com.

WHY ANDY CHOSE NEBRASKA: "I grew up a big Husker fan. Their winning tradition. I mean, they've won nine games a season for ever. I want to be a part of that. They have great academics and a great football team."

FRANK SOLICH: "He has outstanding speed and great hands. He's a really great addition to a great group of receivers in last year's class."

PARENTS: Nick and Cherie Birkel



Titus Brothers

Defensive Back
Converse, Texas
(Judson)
Height: 5-11
Weight: 190
Speed: 4.5
DOB: June 5,
1985

BIO: Brothers, a three-year letterman, has been a two-year starter at cornerback for Judson High School in Converse, Texas. Brothers was instrumental in Judson's success and helped lead the team to a 14-1 record and the Class 5A state championship. As a senior, he registered 18 pass breakups, 30 tackles and two interceptions. Brothers also scored two touchdowns, returning a fumble and an interception for touchdowns. His efforts as a senior earned him second-team all-district honors. Brothers is a very physically-developed corner who can be effective in press coverage, yet he also has the speed to run with receivers downfield. Brothers was equally successful on the track for Judson last year, recording a personal best clocking of 10.3 seconds in the 100 meters and 21.0 seconds in the 200 meters. As a junior, he was the district and regional champion in both the 100 and 200 meters, and also participated in the school's district championship 4x100 meter relay team. Brothers finished fifth in the state in the 100 meters and placed seventh in the 200, while the Judson relay team also qualified for the state meet. He intends to run track at the collegiate level as well. Brothers chose Nebraska over TCU and Arkansas. He was rated as a three-star prospect and the No. 54 cornerback in the nation by Rivals.com.

WHY TITUS CHOSE NEBRASKA: "Their weight room really impressed me and their academic support system. I got a chance to meet defensive backs' coach Marvin Sanders, and he seems like a good coach. He is confident of the things he is doing."

PARENTS: Sharon and Morris Brothers



Brett Byford

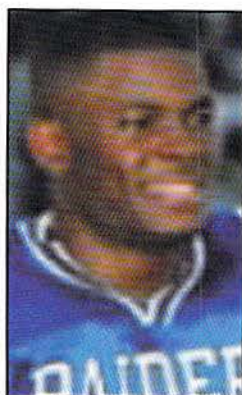
**Offensive Lineman
Hartselle,
Ala.**

**Height: 6-4
Weight: 290
Speed: 5.0
DOB: Aug. 9,
1984**

BIO: Byford was a two-year starter on the offensive line for Hartselle High School and helped lead his team to a 11-3 record and a berth in the Alabama Class 5-A semifinals as a senior. Acknowledged by many as the top offensive guard prospect in the state of Alabama last year, Byford averaged seven pancake blocks per game, with a single-game high of 15. He was a first-team all-state selection by the Alabama Sportswriters Association and was also named to the Birmingham News' Super All-State first team. Byford has experience playing both offensive guard and offensive tackle and is known for being an aggressive run blocker who battles to the whistle. He's also a multi-sport athlete, starting on Hartselle's basketball team and playing a year of baseball as a freshman. When he's not playing sports, Byford is very active in community service activities, including serving as his school's student council president and senior class secretary. He is also the treasurer of Hartselle's Fellowship of Christian Athletes group and volunteers at local elementary schools and nursing homes. Byford chose Nebraska over South Carolina, Georgia Tech and Clemson. He was rated as a three-star prospect and the No. 18 offensive guard in the nation by Rivals.com.

WHY BRETT CHOSE NEBRASKA: "It is where God wanted me to be. I wanted to commit lots of times, but I held back. I wanted to make sure I was serving God's will. The visit to Lincoln was the icing on the cake."

PARENTS: Joe and Cathy Byford



Steve Craver

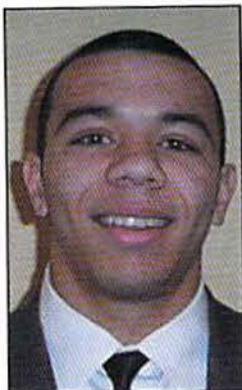
**Free Safety
Hurst, Texas
(L.D. Bell)**

**Height: 6-2
Weight: 195
Speed: 4.5
DOB: April 6,
1984**

BIO: Craver, the younger brother of former Husker cornerback Keyuo Craver, comes out of high school bigger, stronger and faster than his brother, who is now playing for the New Orleans Saints. An accomplished two-way player for L.D. Bell, Craver registered 70 tackles on defense as a free safety and also rushed for 323 yards and threw for 300 as his team's quarterback. His performance last year was good enough to earn first-team all-district honors after guiding his team to a 7-5 record and a trip to the first round of the Class 5-A state playoffs. As a sophomore, Craver played quarterback at Harleton High School before transferring to L.D. Bell. He ended up missing the majority of his junior season with an injury, but showed that he was fully recovered as a senior. The Dallas Morning News ranked him as the No. 25 overall prospect in the Dallas/Fort Worth metro area and the No. 75 prospect in Texas. Craver has a reputation as a very physical and hard-hitting defender with great speed. With his size and toughness, it's possible that he could end up at one of the outside linebacker positions, though he will likely begin his career in the secondary. In addition to football, Craver also runs track and acts in school plays. Craver committed to Nebraska early last summer and was the first out-of-state player to commit to the Huskers last year. In addition to Nebraska, he also received offers from Oklahoma, Colorado and West Virginia. Craver was rated as a three-star prospect and the No. 33 safety in the nation by Rivals.com.

WHY STEVE CHOSE NEBRASKA: "Being the little brother of a Nebraska Cornhusker, I've always had my eye on Nebraska. I want to keep the name going. I know that by doing my part and doing my job that they will take care of me. I have no questions in my mind."

PARENTS: Steve Sr. and Kathy Craver



Joe Dailey

Quarterback
Jersey City, N.J.
(St. Peter's Prep)
Height: 6-1
Weight: 200
Speed: 4.47
DOB: Nov. 19,
1983

BIO: A rare four-year starter at quarterback in the very competitive New Jersey Catholic League, Dailey led St. Peter's Prep to a cumulative 36-6 record and four HCIAA titles. As a senior, he completed 74 of 136 passes (54.4 percent) and 19 touchdowns. He also ran for 783 yards and 13 touchdowns. Dailey's 2002 team finished 10-1 and advanced to the state semifinals. As a junior, he threw for more than 1,100 yards and 17 touchdowns while rushing for 700 more. Dailey earned first-team all-area and all-county honors as a senior. He was named to the New Jersey Super 100 Team, selected to the MSG All-Heisman Team and named the Player-of-the-Year by the Hudson Reporter. His performance over four years set school records for most touchdown passes, most touchdown runs, passing attempts, passing completions and rushing yards by a quarterback. Though Dailey has very little experience running the option, his high school offense did feature the quarterback extensively as a runner. Dailey picked the Huskers over Syracuse, Rutgers, Virginia Tech and Virginia. He was rated as a three-star prospect and the No. 13 dual-threat quarterback prospect by Rivals.com.

WHY JOE CHOSE NEBRASKA: "I think I will blossom in an environment that is so high on football, that breathes football, and I'm a guy that breathes football. I was born with a football in my hand. Football is my life. Nebraska is football country, and that is what I am looking for in a college — seriousness about the game. The people in Nebraska are friendly. I like that a lot."

FRANK SOLICH: "He's a great combination runner/thrower. We set out to find a guy that could be a part of our power running game, but who could throw as well. He's a big, physical quarterback. We're going to give him every opportunity."

PARENT: Doreen Dailey



Donald DeFrاند

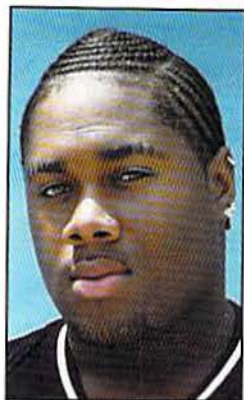
Cornerback
Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.
(Dodge City CC)
Height: 6-2
Weight: 180
Speed: 4.4
DOB: Feb. 4,
1982

BIO: DeFrاند is a big, physical cornerback with speed — a welcome addition for a team in need of immediate help at the position. He will enroll in August with sophomore status after having redshirted in 2002 while recovering from a hip injury. He is already near fully speed. DeFrاند started at cornerback as a freshman for Dodge City and registered 24 tackles, three interceptions and 17 pass breakups. One of his interceptions was returned for a touchdown. He also distinguished himself as kick returner, accumulating 335 return yards (47.8 ave.). Two of his kickoffs were returned for touchdowns of 89 and 90 yards. DeFrاند attended high school at Stranahan High in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Playing in Class 5A (second-largest), he was a three-year starter at cornerback. He also started at wide receiver as a junior and quarterback as a senior in 2000. DeFrاند earned first-team all-state honors as a cornerback following his senior season. He is particularly adept at bump-and-run press coverage, but also has the speed to run with the fastest receivers. In addition to football, DeFrاند was one of the state's top sprinters, winning the 100 and 200-meter dashes at the state meet as a senior and participating in the school's gold medal 4x100 meter relay team. He recorded the state's fastest time in the 100 meters in 2001 (10.3). He chose the Huskers over Texas Tech, Kansas State and Florida State and was rated as a three-star prospect at cornerback by Rivals.com.

WHY DONALD CHOSE NEBRASKA: "The tradition they've got there, the great graduation rate, and the facilities those guys have. I also like the new coaches. I got in good with Coach Sanders and Coach Pelini. The tradition there just really got me."

FRANK SOLICH: "He's a great sprinter who will run track as well. He has excellent size for a corner at 6-2. He can press, play off, and burst in on breaks. He's a complete player."

PARENTS: Jinette Royer and Dard DeFrاند



Darren DeLone

Offensive Lineman
Pomona, Calif.
(Mt. San Antonio)
Height: 6-5
Weight: 320
Speed: 5.0
DOB: Jan. 22,
1982

BIO: DeLone was a two-year starter for Mount San Antonio Community College, playing defensive tackle as a freshman and offensive tackle as a sophomore. As a high school player at Garey High School in Pomona, California, DeLone started at both tight end and defensive end, but also saw time at outside linebacker and fullback in goal-line situations. As a high school senior, he registered 88 tackles and two interceptions for touchdowns on defense, in addition to eight touchdowns on offense. His efforts earned first-team All-Miramonte League honors as a sophomore, junior and senior. He finished his high school career with 96 assisted tackles, 50 unassisted tackles and 35 sacks. Following his high school career, DeLone was selected to play in both the California-Texas and East-West All-Star Games. On the basketball court, he starred at center for four years for Garey High, setting the school's season record for shot blocks, including 10 in a single game. DeLone is easily the biggest recruit in the 2003 Husker class and comes to Lincoln with two years of Division I eligibility. He is expected to contend for playing time at right offensive tackle. DeLone chose the Huskers over Arizona State and Mississippi State and was rated as a three-star offensive tackle prospect by Rivals.com.

WHY DARREN CHOSE NEBRASKA:

"After I saw the communications department they have and the weight room . . . and experiencing the way they treated me, I went ahead and made my commitment. It was my first visit and my last."

FRANK SOLICH: "He's 6-5 and 320 pounds. Size and strength-wise, he can get it done. He played basketball and is a much better basketball player than you might think. He has great movement and excellent feet."

PARENTS: Alex and Dorothy DeLone



David Dyches

Place-Kicker
Spring, Texas
(Westfield)
Height: 6-1
Weight: 185
Speed: 4.79
DOB: Oct. 16,
1984

BIO: A two-year starter at Westfield High School in Houston, Texas, Dyches was recognized as one of the top kickers in the nation with an invitation to the U.S. Army All-American Bowl in San Antonio in January. Starting in the game, he showed impressive leg strength and kicked a 42-yard field goal — his team's only score. As a senior, Dyches connected on 4 of 7 field goals with a long of 44 yards, as well as 31 of 35 extra-point attempts. He also registered 27 touchbacks on kick-offs. As a junior, he made 11 of 16 field goals and 52 of his 55 extra-point attempts. Dyches is known for having an extremely strong leg and is capable of kicking field goals of more than 50 yards. He was prepared to join the Husker program as a grayshirt, but received a full scholarship immediately when defensive back prospect Mike Jenkins committed to Southern Florida over the Huskers. Dyches chose Nebraska over Ohio State and was rated as a three-star prospect and the No. 12 place-kicker in the nation by Rivals.com.

WHY DAVID CHOSE NEBRASKA: "Coach Brown said he could envision me as the next All-America kicker. I like the sound of that."

PARENTS: Dave and Sandra Dyches



Tierre Green

Athlete
Omaha, Neb.
(Benson)
Height: 6-1
Weight: 195
Speed: 4.4
DOB: Feb. 4,
1985

BIO: Despite being injured for a significant portion of the 2002 season and playing on a 1-8 Benson team, Green still managed to rush for 627 yards and eight touchdowns — an average of nearly 6 yards-per-carry. On defense he registered 63 tackles, 50 of which were unassisted, in addition to returning an interception for a touchdown and forcing two fumbles. His efforts earned him first-team All-Metro honors as a defensive back. Despite being well known to fans of Nebraska Class A prep football, Green's academic status kept him off the radar of most recruiting analysts until very late in the year. However, a recent ACT score of 22 will likely ensure his Division I eligibility for the 2003 season. Green is a versatile athlete who could play any of eight different positions at Nebraska. As a running back, he displayed outstanding vision and elusiveness, as well as impressive quickness and acceleration. On defense, he has the size and speed to be a safety or outside linebacker. Green's position at Nebraska has not yet been determined, but he is likely to start out on offense as an I-back. Green is a cousin of former Husker I-back and current Green Bay Packer starter Ahman Green, and his uncle also played for Nebraska in the late 1960s. He selected Nebraska over Iowa State and San Jose State and was rated as a two-star prospect by Rivals.com.

WHY TIERRE CHOSE NEBRASKA: "I've absolutely been wanting to go there for 10 or 12 years. They're 'Nebraska' and they're always at the top with Miami and Florida State. My mom likes them too because they are academically grounded."

FRANK SOLICH: "He's an athlete who could line up on either side of the ball for us. He will most likely be a running back in our system, but could also be the kind of guy who could line up on the defensive side of the ball."

PARENT: Lisa Conway



Corey McKeon

Linebacker
Naperville, Ill.
(North)
Height: 6-2
Weight: 215
Speed: 4.45
DOB: Aug. 29,
1984

BIO: Playing for his father at North High School in Naperville, Ill., McKeon starred on both sides of the football. As a senior safety, he recorded 60 tackles and six interceptions. Two of his six picks were returned for touchdowns, including one for 98 yards. On offense, he played both wide receiver and running back, totaling 1,900 all-purpose yards and 22 touchdowns. His leadership on the field last year helped North to a 9-2 record in Illinois' largest class. Unanimously acknowledged as one of the top senior prospects in Illinois, McKeon earned first-team all-state honors from the IHSA, the Illinois High School Coaches Association and the Illinois Gazette. He was a two-time all-conference and all-area selection. McKeon was selected to participate in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl in San Antonio and started the game at middle linebacker. He is known for having outstanding speed and quickness and is an aggressive hitter with a nose for the football. McKeon also stars as a small forward on the basketball court, averaging 21 points, eight rebounds and seven assists per game. He chose Nebraska over Purdue, South Carolina, Illinois, Wisconsin and Miami of Ohio. McKeon was rated as a three-star prospect and the No. 23 outside linebacker in the nation by Rivals.com.

WHY COREY CHOSE NEBRASKA: "I just wanted to find a place that I was comfortable and the best chance to succeed. Nebraska seemed to offer that."

PARENTS: Larry and Sandy McKeon



Josh Mueller

Tight End
Columbus, Neb.
(Lakeview)
Height: 6-6
Weight: 250
Speed: 4.8
DOB: Aug. 28,
1984

BIO: Mueller is a versatile athlete who played three different offensive positions for Columbus Lakeview over the past four years. As a sophomore, he started for the Vikings at tight end. He then moved to running back as a junior and rushed for 851 yards. The performance earned him honorable-mention all-state honors. Shoulder and knee injuries shortened his senior season, but Mueller returned late in the year as a wide receiver and caught 10 passes. Though he also lettered in basketball as a freshman, sophomore and junior, Mueller's recovery from shoulder surgery has prevented him from participating in basketball as a senior. Lakeview won the Class C-1 state championship in basketball during Mueller's sophomore season and was the state runner-up in 2002. In addition to football and basketball, Mueller also earned two letters in track. He is expected to be fully recovered from shoulder surgery by the summer. Mueller is an outstanding athlete who moves very well for his size. His mother, Marla (Lichty) Mueller, was also a Husker athlete, earning three letters in volleyball from 1978 to 1980. A three-year participant in Big Red Football Camp, Mueller was the second player to commit to Nebraska in the 2003 class. He chose the Huskers in the fall of 2001 and didn't seriously consider other schools. Mueller was rated as a four-star prospect and the No. 10 tight end in the nation by Rivals.com.

WHY JOSH CHOSE NEBRASKA: "I liked pretty much everything. I already knew a lot about them and have seen everything already because I went to all of the games."

FRANK SOLICH: "Josh Mueller has had a couple of injuries that kept him out of action most of the year. He played running back as a junior. He has excellent size and excellent mobility."

PARENTS: Con and Marla Mueller



Wali Muhammad

Rush End
Bloomfield, N.J.
(Coffeyville CC)
Height: 6-2
Weight: 245
Speed: 4.6
DOB: April 17,
1983

BIO: Muhammad had a stellar freshman season at Coffeyville Community College last year, recording 118 tackles (37 for loss), 22 sacks and two forced fumbles as a defensive end. The team finished with a 9-3 record and Muhammad earned first-team All-Jayhawk Conference honors. The 22 sacks were a school record. His performance earned him a first-team Juco All-America selection by JC Gridwire and honorable-mention All-America honors by the National Junior College Athletic Association. In high school, Muhammad was a second-team all-state selection as a senior, recording 79 tackles (13 for loss) from his outside linebacker position. He was a two-time all-area selection and a three-year starter on defense. Muhammad is a quick and effective edge rusher with three years of Division I eligibility remaining. He should be able to provide immediate depth on the Husker defensive line, which just graduated three of its top-four rush ends. Muhammad chose Nebraska over Colorado State, Temple, Indiana and Kansas. He was rated as a three-star prospect at defensive end by Rivals.com.

WHY WALI CHOSE NEBRASKA: "Everything. No complaints. Their weight room is awesome."

FRANK SOLICH: "He's got a great combination of speed and size. We all know that we need rush ends. Wali has great quickness."

PARENTS: Wali Muhammad Sr. and Marilyn Tynes



Chris Patrick

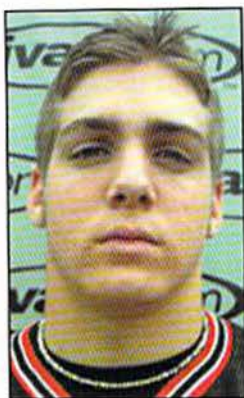
Rush End
Ithaca,
Mich.
Height: 6-6
Weight: 245
Speed: 5.02
DOB: Aug. 22,
1984

BIO: Patrick is a multi-sport athlete from Michigan — a state Nebraska has not recruited heavily over the years. He originally committed to Wisconsin in August of 2002 but later changed his commitment to Purdue in December. However, a change of heart prompted a visit to Lincoln, and he changed his commitment in favor of Nebraska shortly thereafter. Patrick was a two-way lineman for Ithaca High, recording 102 tackles, eight sacks, six quarterback hurries, four forced fumbles and five blocked kicks on defense. As a junior he registered 95 tackles (20 for loss) and eight sacks on an 11-1 team, earning honorable-mention all-state honors. As a senior, the Lansing State Journal ranked him as the ninth-best overall prospect in Michigan, while the Detroit Free Press listed him as the state's No. 4 player. Patrick has also starred on the basketball court as a three-year starter at center and is averaging 11.8 points and 13 rebounds per game. His brother Joe is also a Division I football player and was a starting offensive lineman at Michigan State last year before an injury ended his season. Patrick ultimately chose Nebraska over Purdue, Wisconsin, Michigan State and Oregon. He was rated as a three-star prospect and the No. 13 weakside defensive end in the nation by Rivals.com.

WHY CHRIS CHOSE NEBRASKA: "The academics and the academic support. I also really like the coaching staff. Coach Jamrog and Coach Solich were real up-front with me and my family and they were totally honest with us. We appreciated that."

FRANK SOLICH: "He's got excellent size and runs very, very well. We think that he will follow in the footsteps of some of the other great rush ends that we have had here at Nebraska."

PARENTS: Philip and Marie Patrick



J.B. Phillips

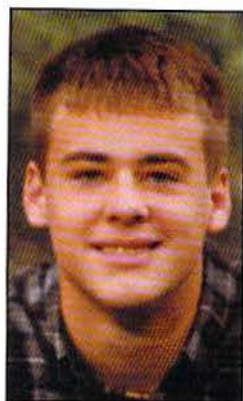
Tight End
Colleyville, Texas
(Heritage)
Height: 6-3
Weight: 250
Speed: 4.67
DOB: May 23,
1985

BIO: Phillips had a standout season at tight end for Colleyville Heritage last year, catching 20 passes in a run-based offense and dominating as an in-line blocker. On defense, he recorded eight sacks as a starting defensive end. His contributions helped Heritage finish with a 9-2 record and a trip to the Texas 5A playoffs. Phillips' play earned him honorable-mention 5A all-state honors as a tight end from the Texas Sportswriters Association. The Dallas Morning News ranked him as the No. 40 player on its list of top-100 area players. As a junior, Phillips played offensive guard and defensive end and earned all-district offensive line honors on a team that posted a 10-2 record and made the playoffs. He also lettered in both track and powerlifting as a junior. An outstanding student, Phillips is a member of the National Honor Society and maintains a 4.0 cumulative grade-point average. A powerful blocker at the tight end position, Phillips keeps his feet moving and drives defenders to the ground. However, he's also an effective receiving threat who can stretch the field with speed. Phillips has a chance to contribute as a true freshman at tight end — a position that graduated three of the top four players on the depth chart. He chose the Huskers over Kansas State and Oklahoma State after visiting all three schools. Phillips was rated as a three-star prospect and the No. 40 tight end by Rivals.com.

WHY J.B. CHOSE NEBRASKA: "I just followed my gut feeling. Coach Downing just answered the last questions that I had. From there, it was an easy pick. All the schools were great, but Nebraska just was what I was feeling all along."

FRANK SOLICH: "J.B. Phillips is an excellent blocking tight end. He is the kind of player who can step in and contribute immediately for us as a blocker."

PARENTS: Jim and Kyle Phillips



Bo Ruud

Linebacker
Lincoln, Neb.
(Southeast)
Height: 6-3
Weight: 210
Speed: 4.5
DOB: Sept. 2,
1984

BIO: Bo joins his brother Barrett in Lincoln after an outstanding career at Lincoln Southeast. He was a two-way starter for the Knights, rushing for 1,385 yards and 15 touchdowns as a running back and also hauling in four passes for 125 yards and two touchdowns. On defense, he recorded 70 tackles (51 solo) in limited usage at linebacker. His contributions led Southeast to a 12-1 record and the state title in 2002. As a junior, he registered 49 tackles on defense and rushed for 450 yards and six touchdowns on offense. Ruud was named the honorary captain of the Lincoln Journal Star's Super-State team and was a first-team selection at running back. The Omaha World-Herald named him to its All-Nebraska team as a linebacker and made him the honorary captain of the defense. Ruud was a second-team all-state selection by both newspapers as a junior. In addition to football, Ruud also plays on Southeast's basketball team and earned honorable-mention all-state honors as a junior. Though not as big or physical as his older brother, Bo is quicker and faster than Barrett, and recorded the highest performance index score of all Big Red Camp participants in 2002. Ruud's father Tom also played linebacker for Nebraska from 1972-1974 and spent five seasons in the NFL with the Buffalo Bills and Cincinnati Bengals. Ruud received the earliest offer ever extended to a high school player by Nebraska, and also became the earliest player to accept a scholarship offer by the Huskers when he made his intentions known in June of 2001. Ruud was rated as a four-star prospect and the No. 11 outside linebacker in the nation by Rivals.com.

WHY BO CHOSE NEBRASKA: "Nebraska offered me at camp last June and I accepted right away. I told them that it was the place I wanted to go. Growing up here in Lincoln, it is the place you picture as being the best."

PARENTS: Tom and Jaime Ruud



Ryan Schuler

Offensive Tackle
Sioux Falls, S.D.
(Washington)
Height: 6-7
Weight: 270
Speed: 4.9
DOB: Dec. 19,
1984

BIO: Schuler is considered by many to be the top overall player in the 2003 Husker recruiting class. Originally a commitment to Oklahoma, he visited Lincoln in January and changed his mind in favor of Nebraska two weeks later. Schuler played on both the offensive and defensive lines as a senior for Sioux Falls Washington and led his team to a 11-2 record and state runner-up finish in Class 11AA, the state's largest. In addition to his dominance on an offensive line that paved the way for 4,725 total yards, Schuler also recorded 84 tackles, six sacks and five forced fumbles on defense. He was recognized as the top player in South Dakota by being named the Gatorade Player of the Year and was a first-team all-state Class 11AA selection by the Sioux Falls Argus Leader. As a junior, he recorded 50 tackles and six sacks on defense. Schuler attended Big Red Football School in the summer of 2002 and displayed outstanding athleticism. He also has impressive strength, with a 400-pound bench press. Schuler was also selected to participate in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl in San Antonio in January, but was unable to participate because he was recovering from a blood clot in his leg. In addition to his accomplishments on the football field, Schuler is also an outstanding student, with a 3.65 cumulative grade-point average. He chose the Huskers over Oklahoma, Colorado and Iowa. Schuler was rated as a four-star prospect and the No. 14 offensive tackle in the nation by Rivals.com.

WHY RYAN CHOSE NEBRASKA: "I just felt more comfort with the people I'll be working with at Nebraska. I felt more comfortable with Coach Cotton and with him being the offensive coordinator it helps that I'll be working with him as my position coach, too. It's a little bit closer to my family and friends. They'll be able to be more involved with my football career at Nebraska."

PARENT: Nancy Schuler



Brandon Teamer

Defensive Tackle
Omaha, Neb.
(Central)
Height: 6-5
Weight: 265
Speed: 5.1
DOB: June 22,
1985

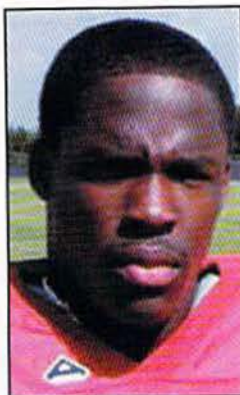
BIO: Teamer is an extremely athletic two-way player who started at both defensive tackle and offensive guard for Central High School last year. He led the team in sacks as a senior and registered an average of more than seven tackles per game. Teamer was a first-team All-Nebraska selection by the Omaha World-Herald and was also named to the Lincoln Journal Star's Super-State team. As a junior, he averaged more than eight tackles per game and received honorable-mention all-state honors. Teamer could play a number of different positions at Nebraska, including defensive tackle, rush end, offensive guard and offensive tackle. However, he is likely to start out at defensive tackle. Teamer will have to gain a fair amount of weight in order to play in the interior defensive line, and is expected to redshirt during his first year. With an impressive group of young defensive linemen already on campus, Teamer was the only interior defensive line prospect signed in the 2003 recruiting class. He combines outstanding speed, quickness and lower-body explosiveness with a long wingspan. Teamer was an early summer commitment to the Huskers and did not seriously consider other schools. He was rated as a four-star prospect and the No. 19 defensive tackle in the nation by Rivals.com.

WHY BRANDON CHOSE NEBRASKA:

"They have pretty decent linemen, and they tend to work harder than other teams. They are real forceful, and I like that about them. Some of the players from my school go there, and that was a factor, too."

FRANK SOLICH: "We felt we got a great, physical player. We had him in camp, so we have had a chance to see him in action. He has great speed and size."

PARENT: Mary Teamer



Adrain Turner

Defensive Back
Terrell,
Texas
Height: 5-10
Weight: 185
Speed: 4.49
DOB: Oct. 12,
1984

BIO: Turner was a productive running back and defensive back for Class 4-A Terrell High School, rushing for 1,500 yards as a senior to lead his team to a 9-2 record and a playoff berth. As a junior, he played more on defense, recording 141 tackles and four interceptions. Turner's performance as a senior earned him District Offensive Player-of-the-Year and first-team honors. Though small in stature, he's a very physical player who likes to play press coverage against receivers. However, he also has outstanding speed to complement his physical style of play. Turner has a chance to play as a true freshman, and will be in the mix for the starting right cornerback job in August. He selected Nebraska over Louisiana Tech, Virginia Tech, Texas Christian, Baylor and North Texas and was rated as a two-star prospect at cornerback by Rivals.com.

WHY ADRAIN CHOSE NEBRASKA: "The way that the people treated me. All of them. The coaches, the players and the people in the state when I was there. That was the difference."

FRANK SOLICH: "We wanted to set out and make sure that we got some good, young players. Titus Brothers, Adrain Turner and Donald DeFrاند — all three have excellent speed and can also help as far as kick return specialists."

PARENT: Carl Turner

Reorganization

Although the timing 'wasn't easy,' Solich followed plan

By Mike Babcock

Some questioned the process, that it took too long and seemed to lack focus. But Frank Solich moved quickly, all things considered, and he did have a plan for restructuring his staff.

The restructuring officially began three days after the Colorado game, when he announced that Craig Bohl, George Darlington and Nelson Barnes had been fired. And it included the retirement announcements of Milt Tenopir and Dan Young at an emotional news conference on Jan. 12.

The next day, Solich presented the staff changes at another news conference, introducing new defensive coordinator Bo Pelini, whose hiring had been announced the week of the Independence Bowl game, and all of the other new assistants except the linebackers coach. He filled that final assistant's position three weeks later, making the announcement on letter-of-intent signing day.

In less than a month and a half, Solich had reorganized, hiring six coaches, reassigning former running backs coach Dave Gillespie and naming Turner Gill assistant head coach.

The timing wasn't "easy on anybody," Solich said during the Monday news conference in the Don Bryant Media Center on the sixth level of the Memorial Stadium skyboxes.

"It certainly hasn't been easy on the media. It hasn't been easy on the fans. It hasn't been easy on the coaches. But it has worked out to where we feel we've put together an outstanding staff."

In doing that, Solich had to take



Tim Albin

**Running Backs Coach,
Passing Game Coordinator**

Age: 37

Playing Experience: 1984-89, Northwestern Oklahoma State

Coaching Experience: 1989-91, Northeastern (Okla.) State (graduate assistant coach/receivers); 1992-93, Northeastern (Okla.) State (assistant coach/offensive coordinator, offensive line; head men's track coach through 1994 spring season); 1994-96, Northwestern Oklahoma State (assistant coach/offensive coordinator; head men's and women's track coach); 1997-99, Northwestern Oklahoma State (head coach); 2000-02, Nebraska (graduate assistant coach/tight ends)



Scott Downing

**Tight Ends Coach,
Recruiting Coordinator**

Age: 46

Playing Experience: Sterling College, 1975-78

Coaching Experience: 1980-81, Sterling College (assistant coach/offensive line); 1982-83, Sterling College (head coach); 1984-85, Nebraska (graduate assistant); 1986, Nebraska (head freshman coach); 1987-90, Wyoming (assistant coach/linebackers); 1991-94, Wyoming (assistant coach/linebackers/defensive coordinator); 1995-1996, Wyoming (assistant head coach/running backs/special teams); 1997-02, Purdue (assistant head coach/running backs/special teams)

into consideration bowl-game preparations as well as recruiting, which went through a dead period that continued until after the annual coaches convention in New Orleans in early January. He was able to identify and interview candidates at the convention.

He went through "an awful lot of interviews," he said.

Nebraska last went through such changes following the 1961 season, when Bob Devaney came from

Wyoming and brought four Cowboy assistants with him, keeping only two from the staff of his predecessor, Bill Jennings. Clete Fischer and George Kelly remained.

Devaney's first staff included four other full-time assistants: Jim Ross, Carl Selmer, John Melton and Mike Corgan, with Tom Osborne and Dallas Dyer serving as graduate assistants.

Neither Devaney nor Osborne, his successor, ever made the wholesale

on Complete



Marvin Sanders

Defensive Backs Coach

Age: 35

Playing Experience: 1985-89, Nebraska

Coaching Experience: 1992-93, Nebraska Wesleyan (assistant coach/secondary); 1994, Minnesota-Morris (assistant coach/secondary, sports information director); 1995-96 Nebraska-Omaha (assistant coach/secondary); 1997-99, Nebraska Omaha (assistant coach/defensive coordinator); 2000, New Mexico State (assistant coach/defensive ends, outside linebackers); 2001-02, Colorado State (assistant coach/secondary)



Jimmy Williams

Linebackers Coach

Age: 42

Playing Experience: College, Nebraska 1979-81; NFL, Detroit Lions 1982-90; Minnesota Vikings 1991; Tampa Bay 1992-93.

Coaching Experience: 1994-98, Pontiac Northern High School (Defensive Coordinator, Linebackers); 1999-2000, Pontiac Central High School (Head Coach); 2001, Grand Valley State University (Defensive Line Coach); 2002, University of Toledo (Defensive Line).

offensive coordinator, after Solich decided to give up those duties. He had followed Osborne's lead and served as his own offensive coordinator.

Gill said he had a choice between assistant head coach and offensive coordinator, while continuing as quarterbacks coach. "That's kind of the way it was presented, yes," he said.

He settled on the former because "I think it's just best for me right now, at this time, to be assisting Frank in some of his administrative duties as a head football coach," Gill said. "I'm excited about that. I was looking forward to kind of another challenge in my coaching career."

Without such a challenge, there was concern Gill might leave.

Being an assistant head coach, "it's probably going to be a little bit more exposure for myself, maybe being more in the media, more exposure to the media and more exposure just out there, being exposed to our players a little bit more, to be more out in front of them, speaking," said Gill.

The first step in the staff restructuring was hiring Pelini as defensive coordinator. He could have coached the linebackers, too, but decided not to. "I'm not doing it because I don't want to coach a position," Pelini said. "I'm doing it so I can be involved in every phase of the defense."

"The other coaches, I have great coaches around me, so I'm going to let them coach. But I want to make sure I'm involved from the front to the back. We'll see how that plays out."

Pelini was directly involved in hiring the other defensive assistants. Jeff Jamrog was the only one retained, with Marvin Sanders coming from Colorado State to coach the secondary and Jimmy Williams coming from Toledo to coach the linebackers — a responsibility Pelini considered handling.

Sanders, who played for the Cornhuskers from 1985 to 1989, turned down an offer to coach the St. Louis Rams' secondary to return to Nebraska. "It was a no-brainer when Coach (Solich) called," he said. "It

changes Solich was forced to make following Nebraska's first seven-loss season since 1958 (3-7).

Osborne hired only three new assistants when he replaced Devaney in 1973.

Devaney made Osborne assistant head coach for the 1972 season, after being persuaded to try for an unprecedented third consecutive national championship. He planned to step aside following the 1971 season, and, as athletic director, had already selected Osborne as his replacement.

Twenty years later, Osborne named Solich assistant head coach, after Wisconsin Coach Barry Alvarez attempted to lure Solich to Madison to be the Badgers' offensive coordinator.

Now Gill will have the title and responsibilities of assistant head coach.

"It was not a difficult decision to give out an assistant head coaching title," Solich said. "I think we have several guys that have great ability along those lines on our staff."

Gill also was a candidate to be the

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Soybeans
Nebraska Soybean Board

wasn't even a question will I go to the NFL or come back to Nebraska.

"It's my second home, and I love the opportunity that I'm here."

Williams, a Nebraska walk-on who became an All-American defensive end and first-round NFL draft pick, emerged from a list of candidates that included Pelini's older brother Carl, a high school coach in Ohio. "It's good to be back," said Williams, who played 12 NFL seasons.

"Very rarely do you get an opportunity to return home."

His experiences at Nebraska contributed significantly to "the type of person I've developed into, father and husband," Williams said, "how it has impacted just about every aspect of my life.

"To be able to come back here and do the same for another young man is phenomenal. I'm eternally indebted to Coach Solich for his trust and confidence, and to the Nebraska family."

Barney Cotton, the new offensive coordinator and offensive line coach, also played at Nebraska, lettering three seasons in the late 1970s, then playing four seasons in the NFL.

"Throughout my whole coaching career, I've really tried not to ever think about coming back and not be distracted with that as a thought in the back of my mind," said Cotton, who came from Tony Samuel's New Mexico State staff. "But it's kind of hard not to have that thought."

Scott Downing, who will coach the tight ends and handle the recruiting coordinator responsibilities, also has Cornhusker connections, having been a graduate assistant at Nebraska in 1984 and 1985 and the head freshman coach in 1986. Downing had been at Purdue the past six years.

Tim Albin, the new running backs coach, was a Cornhusker graduate assistant the past three seasons, working with the tight ends and organizing the defensive scout team.

Gillespie, who had served as the running backs coach and recruiting coordinator, becomes an assistant athletic director for football. "I have used Dave, at times, as a sounding board," Solich said.

"He has great ideas. I think that will be an exceptional move for us."

Albin also will be the Cornhuskers' first passing game coordinator, evidence of Solich's determination to incorporate more passing into the offense. "I'm going to be an extension of Barney (Cotton) and what he wants to get done in the passing game," said Albin.



Nebraska's returning assistants are (from left) quarterbacks coach Turner Gill, wide receivers coach Ron Brown and defensive line coach Jeff Jamrog. Gill was named assistant head coach. Jamrog also will be special teams coordinator.

Defensive line coach Jeff Jamrog, who will have the added duties of special teams coordinator, and wide receivers coach Ron Brown were on the road recruiting the day the changes were announced.

And Gill had to leave the news conference early to catch a flight to

recruit.

That was an important consideration in the staff restructuring.

"It may not have seemed that way to you as we went through the process, but after announcing the staff, I wanted to be able to get coaches on the road," Solich said. "I wanted

to get our new coaches in players' homes and get their names and faces in front of them."

Whether it seemed that way or not, Solich had a plan. And "I am pleased with the final results," he said. "I think it worked out exceptionally well for us." ■

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First Down?

Passing on first down wasn't unusual for Cotton's offense

Franks Solich and Barney Cotton watched videotape of New Mexico State games from last season as part of the evaluation process preceding Cotton's hiring as Nebraska's new offensive coordinator.

Four Aggie receivers were in the game, prompting Solich to ask what down it was.

"Well, this is first down," Cotton said.

The play was a pass, which was completed.

"Now, what down is this?" Solich asked later in the first quarter.

"That's first down," Cotton replied, referring to another pass play.

In the second quarter, the exchange was repeated.

Solich: "What down is that?"

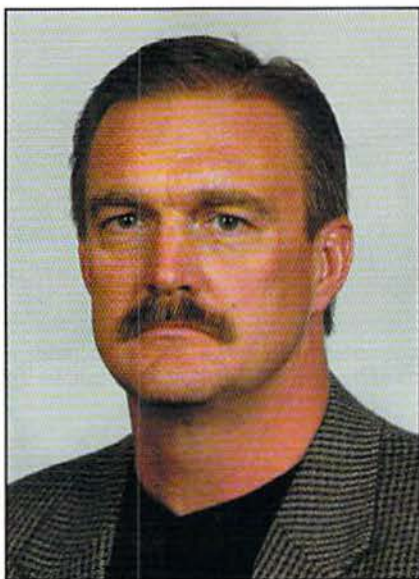
Cotton: "Uh, that's first down." And another pass.

Cotton described the session during the mid-January news conference at which he and the Cornhuskers' other new assistant coaches were formally introduced.

The former Cornhusker lineman — three years on offense, one on defense — wasn't averse to calling first-and-10 pass plays as the offensive coordinator at New Mexico State. That propensity "will probably make a lot of people feel good around the state," Solich said in introducing him.

New Mexico State threw about 35 percent of the time on first down last season.

And "we kind of thought we would complete about 75 to 80 per-



Barney Cotton

**Offensive Coordinator,
Offensive Line Coach**

Age: 46

Playing Experience: 1975-78, Nebraska; 1979, Cincinnati Bengals; 1980-82, St. Louis Cardinals

Coaching Experience: 1987-88, Nebraska (graduate assistant); 1989-94, St. Cloud State (assistant coach/offensive coordinator/offensive line); 1995-96, Hastings College (head coach); 1997-2002, New Mexico State (assistant head coach/offensive coordinator/offensive line)

cent of our throws on first down," said Cotton, who also will coach the offensive line. "So hopefully, we'll be able to bring some of that here and be a little bit unpredictable, make the defense defend the whole football field."

First-down passes aren't that big of a risk with such a high completion percentage.

"I think you need to take those chances," Cotton said. "If you're unsuccessful, second-and-10 is still not a bad running down. If you have options in your system, which we will continue to have, second-and-10 is not a terrible running down. Third-

and-10 is not necessarily a great down, but taking a chance on first down occasionally and having a few second-and-10s, those are not drive-stoppers.

"Third-and-10s, those are the things that are tough. Then you're talking about maybe a 35 percent first-down ratio. But second-and-10 is not a big detriment to being successful."

Such willingness notwithstanding, Cotton doesn't plan to reshape Nebraska's offense beyond recognition. The Cornhuskers will still be run-oriented, and physical.

He is "kind of a blue-collar guy," he said. "And the biggest thing I'd like to say to you is, we're going to play a real physical brand of football. I'd like to say that we want to be the most physical team in the Big 12 Conference, if not the country, in a short matter of time. That's kind of what I'm all about, being physical in the running game but also being physical in the throwing game."

Nebraska didn't have much of a throwing game last season, ranking No. 112 in passing among 117 NCAA Division I-A teams. Only North Texas, Rice, Navy, Air Force and Ohio ranked lower.

Cotton's offense at New Mexico State ranked 73rd nationally in passing, enough to supplement a running game that ranked 14th, averaging 214.58 yards per game on the ground.

That combination enabled the Aggies to rank No. 23 in total offense. And they were able to do so "going against a schedule where, in the non-conference, they were virtually outmanned in a number of games, playing against some very big-named programs around the country," said Solich.

In addition, Cotton's offense "has been able to put some points on the board," he said.

Solich has shown a determination to do whatever it takes to put points on the board, following a season in which Nebraska ranked 61st in total

"And the biggest thing I'd like to say to you is, we're going to play a real physical brand of football. I'd like to say that we want to be the most physical team in the Big 12 Conference, if not the country, in a short matter of time."

— Offensive Coordinator Barney Cotton

offense and 59th in scoring offense. The Cornhuskers averaged 373.14 yards, the lowest since 1969, and 27.36 points, the lowest since 1977.

The only aspect of the offense that was Nebraska-like in 2002 was rushing. The Cornhuskers ranked fourth nationally, averaging 268.71 yards per game on the ground.

And that included only 97 yards, on 40 carries, against Kansas State.

As a result, Solich decided it was time to step down as his own offensive coordinator, a role that his predecessor as head coach, Tom Osborne, also handled for 25 years.

Solich's interest in incorporating more passing into the offense is underscored by the assigning of new running backs coach Tim Albin the responsibility of coordinating the passing game.

"I'm going to be an extension of Barney and what he wants to get done in the passing game," said Albin. "I like to hear that first-down throwing part of it. It's going to be great.

"I'm going to be right here, in Barney's ear about what I think. He's big enough (that) he can just swat it away, too. But I'm not going to be any quieter than what I've been."

Cotton, like new defensive coordinator Bo Pelini, emphasized that the offense wouldn't be his alone, that the other assistants would have input as well. "We're all partners in this thing," he said.

"Sure, I'll be calling plays. But it

will be our offense, Nebraska's offense."

Although the assistant coaches' game-day assignments have yet to be set, Cotton intends to do his play calling on the sideline. "I think it's really important that you communicate with guys as they come off the field,

not so much to make adjustments sometimes but just to see where they're at in a game," he said. "Sometimes you try to calm them down. Sometimes you try to stir them up.


"You also have to be there to make any corrections that need to be made, especially for a line coach. I think you have to do that hands-on. You can't do that from a telephone."

Cotton sees his charge as bringing some change to an offensive system that has served Nebraska so well for the better part of two decades. Solich wouldn't have hired him as offensive coordinator "if he wasn't ready to embrace some change in that area," said Cotton.

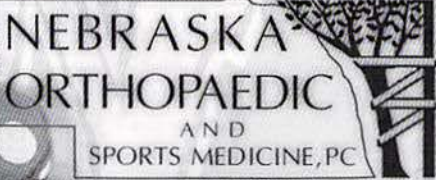
"He's been very open and forthcoming in our conversations."


Their discussions were "fairly intense," Cotton said. "I mean, to entrust a front guy with the whole package . . . there aren't many of us around that are offensive coordinators that are also line coaches. So we did a lot of talking to make sure that was going to be the right fit here."

After all, passes on first-and-10 can seem fairly radical. ■



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Fresh Start

Pelini says defense will be starting from scratch in the spring

In order to go on the road recruiting, new defensive coordinator Bo Pelini had to demonstrate his familiarity with NCAA recruiting regulations by passing an exam.

Had he failed the exam, he would have had to wait 30 days before retaking it. That would have kept him off the road until after Feb. 5, the first day letters of intent could be signed.

Mary Lyn Wininger, Coach Frank Solich's secretary, interrupted a staff meeting after Pelini had taken the test to announce that the results were back, and he had failed.

The room went silent, with coaches looking at each other in disbelief.

It wasn't until later that Wininger told Solich she had been kidding, at Pelini's request. She had taken Pelini to the test site and then picked him up. They had devised the plan on the way.

"That's the kind of start we're off to with Bo," Solich said. "It's going to be a great time working with Bo. I've already enjoyed it. He's got a little bit of a humorous side to him."

He also has a lot of a serious side, which was apparent as he discussed his coaching philosophy with the defense during a brief break from recruiting in early January.

He might have caused some raised eyebrows with his expectations, but "I don't care whether I did or I didn't," he said. "I'm just telling them the way it is and the way it's going to be. They either follow suit or they're not going to play. I'm just being hon-



Bo Pelini

Defensive Coordinator

Age: 35

Playing Experience: Ohio State, 1987-90

Coaching Experience: 1991, Iowa (graduate assistant); 1993, Cardinal Mooney High School, Youngstown, Ohio (assistant coach/quarterbacks, secondary); 1994-96, San Francisco 49ers (defensive assistant/secondary); 1997-99, New England Patriots (assistant coach/linebackers); 2000-02, Green Bay Packers (assistant coach/linebackers)

est with them, telling them what we're going to expect, how we're going to go about things and what I'm all about, what the staff is all about."

With only one defensive assistant returning, line coach Jeff Jamrog, the defense will be starting from scratch in spring practice. "There aren't any starters right now," said Pelini.

Eight defensive players who started the Independence Bowl game return, as do Philip Bland, who missed the bowl game because of a pulled hamstring, and, at some point, Willie Amos, who was the starting free safety before suffering a severe

knee injury near the end of last spring.

In addition, Jason Lohr, a starter at nose tackle who also missed most of the last two seasons because of a knee injury, is expected to be granted another season of eligibility.

"There are some guys, yes, that have played some football around here, and that will be taken into account," Pelini said. "But they need to perform from this day forward."

And his evaluation was to begin immediately after recruiting was finished.

"That's going to go on for a while," he said. "It's going to take some time for me to get to know them. We don't play a game until September. That's when we've got to get everything locked in."

Nebraska opens at home against Oklahoma State on Aug. 30. Between now and then, "I've just got to formulate my thoughts, get to know the guys and where I think they're going to fit and go from there," Pelini said.

"I'm in no hurry to get that done. I'm going to take my time doing it."

The player evaluations will be the foundation on which he will build the defense.

And he has his work cut out for him. The Cornhuskers ranked 55th nationally in total defense, allowing 361.93 yards per game. That's the most yardage they've yielded since 1983 (368.3). In fact, they have given up more yards, on average, in only three other seasons since 1946.

They ranked 45th nationally in scoring defense, allowing 20 or more points per game (23.9) for the first time since the 1958 season, 49th in rushing defense and 57th in passing defense.

Pelini doesn't plan to dwell on such things, however. "To be honest with you, I'm not real concerned with what's gone on in the past. I'm looking to going forward," he said.

"I know what it takes to play great defense. I'm ready to establish the principles we come up with as a staff

"I'm just telling them the way it is and the way it's going to be. They either follow suit or they're not going to play."

— Defensive Coordinator Bo Pelini

and move forward. The past is the past, as far as I'm concerned."

During the mid-January news conference at which he and the other new assistants were introduced, Pelini emphasized that the defense would reflect ideas other than just his.

"I want to make that clear right now," he said. He and the other assis-

tants are "going to come to some conclusions, look at the personnel we have here, and we're going to come up with a plan.

"It's not Coach Pelini's defense. It's going to be the University of Nebraska, Marvin Sanders, Jeff Jamrog, Bo Pelini and the rest of the staff's. We're in this together."

Though his full-time coaching

career has been in the NFL, he doesn't expect problems adapting to the college game. "What makes a great defense is what makes a great defense at any level," said Pelini. "It's about great effort, going after the football, taking the football away from people, tackling.

"Those principles always stay the same. What it takes to be a great football player and a great defender doesn't change from high school to college to the pros.

"And that's what I'm looking for." Pelini is confident in his ability to put the schemes in place.

"I've been around some of the best defensive minds, guys that I have a tremendous amount of respect for," he said. "I've established the principles I know are important to play great defense. It comes down to the players. It comes down to effort, first of all. It's going to come down to how bad they want to win."

Appropriately enough, his first responsibility was going on the road to recruit such players.

To do that, he had to pass the NCAA test, which he did — much to the relief of Solich. ■

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Women's Basketball

| | |
|------------|------------------------------------|
| Nov. 22 | Grambling State, W 63-40 |
| Nov. 24 | Rice, W 71-56 |
| Dec. 1 | @ Creighton, L 55-40 |
| Dec. 5 | Drake, L 63-55 |
| Dec. 9 | Texas Southern, W 71-48 |
| Dec. 11 | Cal State-Fullerton, W 78-60 |
| Dec. 15 | Cincinnati, W 65-55 |
| Dec. 22 | New Orleans, W 73-62 |
| Dec. 28 | *San Diego, W 62-61 |
| Dec. 30 | *Penn State, L 83-64 |
| Jan. 5 | Texas-Pan American, L 61-58 |
| Jan. 11 | Oklahoma, L 57-43 |
| Jan. 14 | @ Colorado, L 74-54 |
| Jan. 19 | Kansas State, L 88-54 |
| Jan. 22 | @ Missouri, L 65-53 |
| Jan. 25 | Iowa State, L 58-53 |
| Jan. 29 | @ Kansas, L 67-64 |
| Feb. 1 | @ Oklahoma State, W 73-59 |
| Feb. 5 | Baylor, L 69-44 |
| Feb. 8 | Missouri, L 64-53 |
| Feb. 12 | @ Kansas State |
| Feb. 15 | @ Texas A&M |
| Feb. 19 | Kansas |
| Feb. 22 | @ Texas |
| Feb. 26 | Texas Tech |
| Mar. 1 | @ Iowa State |
| Mar. 5 | Colorado |
| Mar. 11-15 | @ Big 12 Tournament, Dallas, Texas |

*Surf & Slam Hoop Classic, San Diego

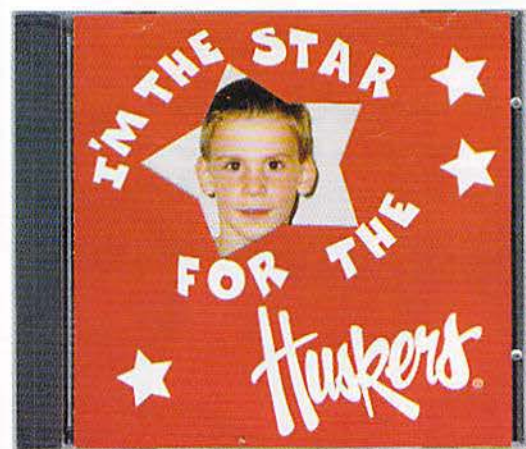


Senior guard Shahidrah Roberts had a season-high 15 points at Kansas.

Men's Basketball

| | |
|------------|------------------------------------|
| Nov. 21 | *Centenary, W 68-45 |
| Nov. 23 | *Alaska-Fairbanks, L 64-61 |
| Nov. 24 | *Ball State, L 73-65 |
| Dec. 1 | Texas-San Antonio, W 69-53 |
| Dec. 5 | @ South Florida, L 65-60 |
| Dec. 8 | Minnesota, W 80-60 |
| Dec. 14 | Indiana-Purdue-FW, W 63-46 |
| Dec. 21 | Creighton, L 81-73 |
| Dec. 27 | UC-Santa Barbara, W 60-57 |
| Dec. 28 | Arizona State, L 75-63 |
| Dec. 31 | E. Washington, W 63-60 |
| Jan. 4 | Denver, W 79-75 ot |
| Jan. 7 | Lipscomb, W 70-60 |
| Jan. 11 | @ Kansas, L 92-59 |
| Jan. 15 | Texas A&M, L 53-52 |
| Jan. 18 | Colorado, 80-77 ot |
| Jan. 22 | @ Kansas State, L 77-53 |
| Jan. 25 | @ Iowa State, L 71-61 |
| Jan. 29 | Missouri, L 63-56 |
| Feb. 1 | Kansas, L 81-51 |
| Feb. 5 | @ Texas Tech, L 75-49 |
| Feb. 12 | Oklahoma State |
| Feb. 15 | Texas |
| Feb. 18 | @ Missouri |
| Feb. 22 | @ Baylor |
| Feb. 25 | Kansas State |
| Mar. 1 | Iowa State |
| Mar. 4 | @ Oklahoma |
| Mar. 8 | @ Colorado |
| Mar. 13-16 | @ Big 12 Tournament, Dallas, Texas |

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RIM SHOTS

Notes And Quotes From The Basketball World

CHARACTER BUILDING

Remaining optimistic has been difficult for the Nebraska men's basketball team. But "we really have no choice but to stay positive and keep our heads up and look at the next game and the next practice and try to get better," junior Andrew Drevo said following an 81-51 loss against Kansas.

The loss was the Cornhuskers' worst ever at the Devaney Sports Center, which opened in 1976, and their worst at home since 1943 — by 56-24, also against Kansas, at the Coliseum.

Nevertheless, "this team has a lot of character, a lot of resiliency, so we're going to try to stay positive, keep plugging away and getting better," said Drevo, who asked, rhetorically: "What's the point in giving up and hanging your head? We've just got to keep fighting."

"We're not, by any means, throwing in the towel."

A team with less character might have done that by now.

Although the Cornhuskers' 8-5 non-conference record wasn't anything special, the problems really began with a 92-59 loss at Kansas in their Big 12 opener.

Eight minutes into the game, sophomore Jake Muhleisen suffered a fractured left hip socket and a fracture in the pelvic area when he landed awkwardly on a drive to the basket.

The extent of the injury wasn't determined until the Monday morning following the Saturday afternoon game. Since the hip wasn't displaced, the injury didn't require surgery. But the initial prognosis was that Muhleisen wouldn't be able to resume playing basketball until the summer.

Muhleisen, the team captain, was leading the Cornhuskers in minutes played (31.3 per game) and assists (3.4), and he was averaging 11.7 points, to rank third on the team.

He had started all but one game during his career at Nebraska.

Junior Nate Johnson moved to the point guard position, with freshman Jason Dourisseau stepping in as a starter for the next game, a 53-52 loss against Texas A&M at the Sports Center.

Senior Brennan Clemmons was still feeling the effects of dislocating three toes on his right foot in a Dec. 1 victory against Texas-San Antonio. Clemmons started the next game against Colorado.

In addition to the loss of Muhleisen, Coach Barry Collier's third Nebraska team has continued to struggle on the road. The Huskers have lost 13 of their last 14 Big 12 road games.

WOMEN STRUGGLE, TOO

Coach Connie Yori's first Nebraska women's team has had to deal with a numbers problem that has been exposed in conference play. But the Huskers were able to snap an 11-game Big 12 losing streak, going back to last season, by winning at Oklahoma State, 73-59.

Alexa Johnson led Nebraska scorers with 23 points.

Despite their 0-6 start in the conference, the Huskers — just six of whom are on scholarship — had continued to work "really hard" in practice, according to Yori.

CRUNCH TIME

The men's team defeated Colorado 80-77 in overtime at the Sports Center, in the game that preceded the Buffaloes' 60-59 upset of then No. 6-ranked Kansas at Boulder.

Nate Johnson scored 24 points to lead the Cornhuskers,

including the two that sent the game into overtime on a drive to the basket with 7.7 seconds remaining.

"Going toward the end, if the game is close, we're always going to go to Nate," said sophomore John Turek, who scored 16 points on 7-of-9 shooting from the field. His lay-up, off a Johnson assist, with 52 seconds left in overtime provided what proved to be the winning points.

Johnson's basket at the end of regulation provided some measure of redemption for a missed 3-point shot with 2 seconds remaining in the 53-52 loss against Texas A&M three days earlier.

There are times when Johnson needs the green light, Collier said afterward, when he needs to tell himself, "Hey, Sherlock, just give him (Johnson) the ball and shut up."

Johnson's shot "was a great individual play," Collier said.

YOUTH NO EXCUSE

The Cornhuskers are young; Clemmons is the team's only senior. "But we have to move beyond that," said Drevo, who, along with Johnson, has led the team in scoring.

Sophomore Corey Simms, who has become a starter and established himself as one of the team's best defenders, agreed. "We can say we're young, but there's really no excuse," he said.

One of the positives about the Cornhuskers' youth is that "we don't dwell on the past," Collier said. "They get discouraged, but they bounce back in a hurry."

Johnson expressed that sentiment following the loss against Missouri at the Sports Center. "At midnight, this game is behind everybody," he said. "It's a whole new attitude. It's all about staying focused, keeping our heads up. We've just got to bounce back."

SHOOTING WOES

Collier's team shot 30.9 percent from the field, including only 22.2 percent during the second half, in losing to Missouri in Lincoln. Though that was the worst the Cornhuskers had shot this season, it was hardly out of the ordinary. They went into February ranked at or near the bottom of the Big 12 in

every major offense category except free throw shooting — they were in the middle of the pack.

They shot just 32.8 percent from the field in their loss at home against Kansas. When that happens, "you've got to hope your defense prevents them (opponents) from shooting around 50 (percent)," Drevo said. "You've got to try to hold the other team under 40 (percent)."

"We haven't really been able to do that consistently."

Nebraska ranked among the Big 12 leaders in field goal percentage and 3-point field goal percentage defense against non-conference opponents. But it fell to the bottom half after conference play began. Going into February, opponents were hitting 44 percent from the field against the Cornhuskers.

By contrast, the Cornhuskers were last in field goal percentage and 10th in 3-point percentage.

BLOCKED AT IOWA STATE

Nebraska hit 14-of-28 shots in the first half of its 71-61 loss at Iowa State but managed only 8 of 31 in the second half. The Cyclones' Big 12-record 17 blocked shots aggravated the problem. ■



Junior Andrew Drevo is Nebraska's second-leading scorer and top rebounder.

A Little Bo

Former coach's harsh words jump-started catcher Grose's Husker career

By Mike Babcock

John Grose didn't begin to feel comfortable at Nebraska until a month and a half into last season. The unlikely catalyst for that comfort was a conversation with then-Coach Dave Van Horn.

Following a mid-week game near the end of March, Grose doesn't remember exactly which one, Van Horn took him aside and "basically told me what I needed to hear," he said.

The fairly one-sided conversation "gave me a little boost."

Although he needed to hear what Van Horn had to say, it wasn't really what he wanted to hear. The words weren't encouraging, quite the contrary. Van Horn laid it out in plain terms.

Grose wasn't getting the job done, and if he didn't start doing it, well, he might want to look elsewhere. The fact was, Van Horn didn't know if Grose was capable of doing the job.

Or so he said that day. In retrospect, Grose saw through the harsh words.

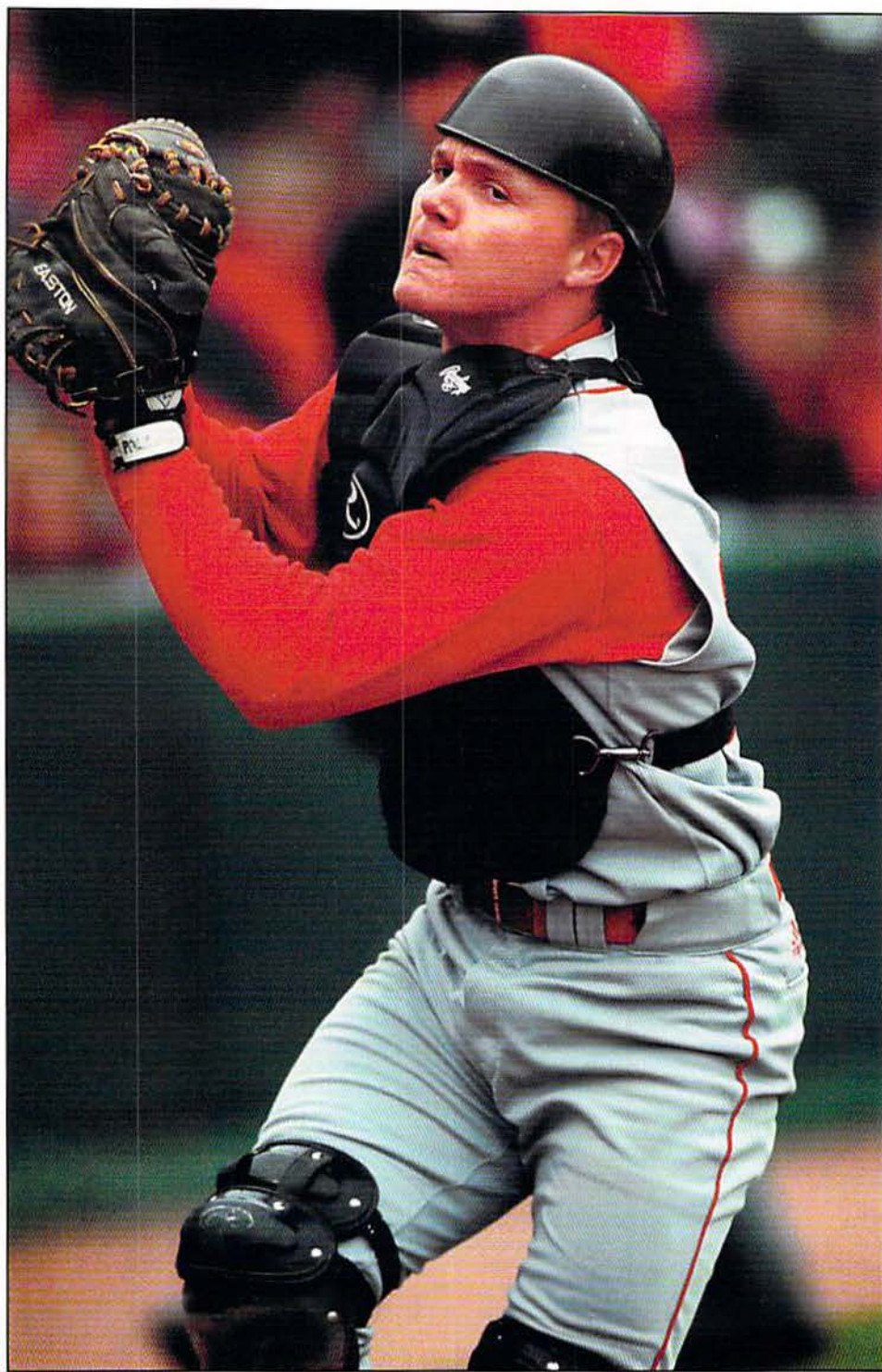
"He knew I could do it," said Grose. "He just needed to motivate me in some way."

Not everyone responds to such criticism. But Van Horn apparently knew Grose would. His no-holds-barred assessment "kind of fired me up, made me want to prove him wrong," Grose said.

The change in Grose, a transfer from Chandler-Gilbert Community College, was reflected in his statistics.

He played sparingly in 11 of the first 24 games, going 5-for-16 at the plate.

He played in three of the next four



John Grose started 37 games and batted .384 in his first season as a Husker.

games, including one at Kansas State and two against Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and was a combined 7-of-11, with four runs scored and eight driven in.

That was a springboard for the remainder of a season in which he batted .384, with a .598 slugging percentage, a .475 on-base percentage, 28 runs scored and 38 runs-batted-in.

He was selected to the Big 12 all-tournament team, going 7-for-14 with four doubles and seven RBI, as well as to the Lincoln all-regional team, after batting .455 with a home run and four RBI.

But Grose's contributions to Nebraska's run to a second consecutive trip to the College World Series went beyond what could be measured statistically. He was an emotional leader.

Leadership comes naturally to Grose, who shared catching duties with Jed Morris.

"I was always taught the catcher is the leader, the catcher is the captain on the team," said Grose, who was one of the Cornhuskers' three elected captains this season. "I think that's something instilled in me from my dad. Don't follow. Always be the guy people are looking to for the answers."

All-American Jeff Leise and Jamie Rodrigue are Nebraska's other captains.

Even without the captain's title, Grose would have taken a leadership role, as he did last season after earning the respect and trust of his teammates and coaches.

To earn respect, "you've got to show you can do it on the field," he said. "You can't just come out, talking a big game and telling people this and that before guys even know what you can do."

"I think that's a big thing I struggled with last year until I got the hang of it."

His post-game session with Van Horn helped him get the hang of it, as did a competitiveness reflected in his involvement in a home-plate confrontation following Nebraska's 6-5 victory against Creighton at Haymarket Park in mid-April and a collision with Texas catcher Ryan Hubele at Austin.

"I'd say I'm definitely a guy that gets into the game a lot and is real emotional," Grose said.

Even though he caught more games than Morris last season, he still played in his former teammate's shadow. Now, he's the clear-cut starter, a fact that has caused him to work even harder.

When he was No. 2, behind

| No. Player | Pos. | Ht. | Wt. | Cl. | Hometown (High School/Previous School) |
|-----------------------|------|------|-----|------|--|
| 11 Anderson, Drew | OF | 6-2 | 195 | Jr. | Kearney, Neb. (Kearney) |
| 42 Becker, Jeremy | LHP | 5-11 | 215 | So. | Scottsbluff, Neb. (Scottsbluff) |
| 10 Belcher, Kevin | OF | 6-2 | 175 | Fr. | Lake Forest, Ill. (Lake Forest) |
| 6 Birmingham, Josh | INF | 6-2 | 185 | Sr. | Hobbs, N.M. (New Mexico JC) |
| 8 Boyer, Jesse | OF | 6-1 | 185 | Fr. | Littleton, Colo. (Neosho CC) (Columbine) |
| 22 Brownell, John | RHP | 6-3 | 190 | So. | Omaha, Neb. (Butler County CC) (Millard West) |
| 12 Bruce, Daniel | OF | 5-11 | 190 | So. | Omaha, Neb. (Millard West) |
| 32 Burch, Jason | RHP | 6-5 | 215 | Jr. | Papillion, Neb. (Papillion-LaVista) |
| 18 Duensing, Brian | LHP | 6-0 | 185 | So. | Omaha, Neb. (Millard South) |
| 48 Foutch, Jake | LHP | 6-5 | 205 | Fr. | Valley, Neb. (Valley) |
| 14 Fusilier, Brandon | OF | 6-3 | 215 | Jr. | Coppell, Texas (Navarro College) |
| 3 Gordon, Alex | INF | 6-1 | 196 | Fr. | Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast) |
| 21 Grose, John | C | 5-10 | 190 | Jr. | Henderson, Nev. (Chandler-Gilbert CC) (Green Valley) |
| 19 Gullion, Joe | INF | 6-1 | 190 | Jr. | Leawood, Kan. (Johnson Co. CC) (Blue Valley North) |
| 20 Hale, Steve | RHP | 6-1 | 205 | Sr. | Yukon, Okla. (Yukon) |
| 31 Harmelink, Mike | RHP | 6-1 | 180 | Fr. | Omaha, Neb. (Creighton Prep) |
| 24 Hoffart, Darren | C | 6-2 | 200 | Rfr. | Omaha, Neb. (Burke) |
| 16 Hopper, Matt | 1B | 6-4 | 215 | Sr. | Golden, Colo. (Bear Creek) |
| 34 Kroenke, Zach | LHP | 6-2 | 180 | Fr. | Omaha, Neb. (Northwest) |
| 30 Ladd, Greg | RHP | 6-2 | 185 | Fr. | Elkhorn, Neb. (Elkhorn) |
| 15 Ledbetter, Curtis | INF | 6-3 | 220 | So. | Lawrence, Kan. (Garden City CC) |
| 1 Leise, Jeff | OF | 5-10 | 165 | Sr. | Omaha, Neb. (Creighton Prep) |
| 46 Lomax, Andy | C | 6-1 | 210 | Fr. | Lincoln, Neb. (Lincoln High) |
| 36 Marsden, Aaron | LHP | 6-6 | 220 | Jr. | Grand Forks, N.D. (Hutchinson CC) (Red River) |
| 9 Merrill, Bubbs | INF | 5-8 | 180 | Jr. | Omaha, Neb. (Texarkana College) (Millard North) |
| 26 Morrissey, Robbie | RHP | 6-2 | 200 | Fr. | Omaha, Neb. (Millard West) |
| 5 Mullinax, Jake | INF | 6-1 | 180 | Jr. | Hesperia, Calif. (Victor Valley CC) (Suhana) |
| 28 O'Neill, Pat | LHP | 5-11 | 185 | Jr. | Littleton, Colo. (Garden City CC) (Heritage) |
| 17 Odenreider, Chase | INF | 6-2 | 200 | Fr. | Omaha, Neb. (Millard North) |
| 39 Pekarek, Justin | LHP | 6-3 | 215 | Jr. | Staplehurst, Neb. (Seward) |
| 13 Robertson, Quinton | RHP | 6-5 | 205 | Jr. | Richland, Miss. (Texarkana College) (Sylvan Hills) |
| 33 Rodrigue, Jamie | LHP | 6-1 | 220 | Sr. | St. Clair, Mo. (St. Clair) |
| 23 Schoeninger, Tim | RHP | 6-3 | 205 | Fr. | Denver, Colo. (Mullen) |
| 35 Shirek, Phil | RHP | 6-3 | 210 | So. | Minot, N.D. (Minot) |
| 44 Sillman, Mike | RHP | 6-1 | 180 | Jr. | Omaha, Neb. (Millard South) |
| 2 Simokaitis, Joe | INF | 6-1 | 185 | So. | St. Louis, Mo. (St. Mary's) |
| 4 Steele, Chad | C | 5-10 | 190 | Rfr. | Omaha, Neb. (Gross) |
| 38 Timm, Dustin | RHP | 6-3 | 185 | So. | Yutan, Neb. (Yutan) |
| 37 Wells, Matt | C | 5-11 | 190 | So. | Littleton, Colo. (Seward Co. CC) (Columbine) |

Morris, he was trying to earn the No. 1 job, "so you're always working that much harder, knowing what you're trying to get to," he said. "When you're in the position I am now, it's easy to let off and not work as hard. So I make sure every day when I go to practice, I tell myself I'm competing for the No. 1 spot. I don't have anything handed to me."

That drive is coupled with a desire to return to the College World Series for a third consecutive season, and to win in Omaha, something the Cornhuskers have been unable to do.

The pressure isn't getting back to Omaha. "We need to win a national championship," said Grose. "We're not going to be satisfied unless we do. So I don't know if we really feel pressure because we know how good of a team we have and our potential. I

know I don't feel pressure.

"I just know what I want, and that's a national championship."

His teammates share that goal, too. "I mean, that's all we talk about," he said. "We can't wait to get back to the College World Series. We can't wait to win a national championship."

Grose is willing to do whatever it takes to accomplish that.

Despite its success the past three seasons, the loss of Van Horn and pitcher Shane Komine has raised questions about how good Nebraska will be. Such doubt is fine with Grose.

"We often say, 'Stay under the radar,'" he said. "The less pressure, the better."

Coach Mike Anderson, Van Horn's successor, "always talks about team," Grose said. "We don't talk about a specific individual player. We always

talk about the good of the team.

"Everything you do is for the good of the team. Each at-bat is for the good of the team. You're not trying to hit 20 jacks (home runs) and .400. You're trying to win ball games. So if you can hit .250 and come up big for us in that one situation, that's what

we need out of you.

"You just need to know your role. I don't think there are guys on this team that are really looking for that superstar role. Every day we're taught: team, team, team."

Grose had that attitude from the moment he stepped onto campus. But

it took the session with Van Horn to get him going. "I think that was the whole plan behind it," said Grose.

After he asserted himself, Van Horn admitted that had been his plan.

"It worked out real well," Grose said. ■

BASE LINES

Notes And Quotes From The Baseball World

NATIONALLY RANKED

The Cornhuskers were ranked No. 19 in the Sports Weekly/ESPN preseason poll and No. 20 by Baseball America. They were picked to finish fourth in the Big 12.

"We understand that other people have expectations of us," said Coach Mike Anderson. "I think I have that as a head coach, that there's going to be different expectations of me."

"We've set our goals for ourselves, and to be honest with you, it's important for us to kind of just go out and take care of what we think is important, not necessarily that somebody picks us fourth or lower in the polls or whatever. Those things are important for some things."

On the field, however, "they don't make that much difference," he said.

LEISE RETURNS

Outfielder Jeff Leise decided to return for his senior season despite being a seventh-round pick of the Anaheim Angels in the major league draft last June.

"That young man exemplifies what Nebraska is all about for us," Anderson said.

Leise batted .371, with 12 home runs, 51 runs-batted-in and 69 runs scored. He had a .585 slugging percentage, a .433 on-base percentage and stole 25 bases in 27 attempts.

NO KOMINE

Even though Shane Komine, who was 41-8 for his career, is gone, Anderson expects Aaron Marsden, Jamie Rodrigue and Brian Duensing, all left-handers, to pick up the pitching slack.

"Those three are our stable guys," said Anderson.

Returning pitchers accounted for 36 of the Cornhuskers' 47 victories last season, led by Marsden, who was 8-1 with a 2.70 earned-run average and three complete games, two of them shutouts.

Marsden, an All-Big 12 selection, will probably be "our ace," Anderson said.

Rodrigue was 7-3 with a 4.15 ERA. Duensing was 6-2 with a 4.73 ERA.

In addition to the pitchers responsible for the 36 wins, "we've got 460 innings back," said Anderson. "It's basically 75 percent of our wins and innings, so that's a little bit comforting for us."

Tim Schoeninger, a freshman from Omaha, is among the young pitchers who could make a significant contribution. "We look for some good things to come from him," Anderson said.

EFFECTS OF CHANGE

With his replacing Dave Van Horn as head coach and Rob Childress being promoted to associate head coach, the program obviously has changed, according to Anderson.

As a result, "there are a lot of question marks as far as the direction," he said.

Senior John Grose doesn't expect the Cornhuskers to miss a beat under Anderson.

"Coach A knows what he's doing," said Grose. "He's been here forever. He knows more than anybody how this program is going to be run and what kind of baseball we play."

"So I don't think it's going to be that big of a change. It hasn't been so far."

Anderson was a Cornhusker assistant for nine years, under Van Horn and John Sanders. "I've seen some of the bad times and I've seen some of the good," he said. "I use the phrase that Coach Childress and myself like to believe that we had a fingerprint on this program and that's important to us."

"In terms of comfort level and everything else, one big factor for me - and I say this for our entire staff - having Rob Childress here is a big factor. That's comforting for me, and that's comforting, I think, for him. We're pretty enthused to be together." ■

Baseball Schedule

Feb. 14-16 — Round Rock Express Classic, Round Rock, Texas: **14** vs. Southwest Texas State, Noon; **15** vs. UT-Pan American, 4 p.m.; **16** vs. California, 11 a.m.; **21** — at Louisiana Tech, Ruston, La., 6 p.m.; **22** — at Louisiana Tech, 3 p.m.; **23** — at Louisiana Tech, 11 a.m.; **Feb. 28-March 1** — Hormel Classic, Minneapolis, Minn.: **28** Notre Dame, 12:15 p.m.

March 1 Wake Forest, 7 p.m.; **7** — Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Hawks Field, 2:05 p.m.; **8** — Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Hawks Field, 1:05 p.m.; **9** — Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Hawks Field, 1:05 p.m.; **11** — Nebraska-Kearney, Hawks Field, 2:05 p.m.; **14** — at Texas A&M, College Station, Texas, 7 p.m.; **15** — at Texas A&M, 7 p.m.; **16** — at Texas A&M, 1 p.m.; **18** — at Rice, Houston, Texas, 7 p.m.; **19** — at Sam Houston State, Huntsville, Texas, 11 a.m.; **21** — Kansas State, Hawks Field, 2:05 p.m.; **22** — Kansas State, Hawks Field, 2:05 p.m.; **23** — Kansas State, Hawks Field, 1:05 p.m.; **25** — Cal Poly, Hawks Field, 4:05 p.m.; **26** — Cal Poly, Hawks Field, 4:05 p.m.; **28** — at Oklahoma, Norman, Okla., 6:35 p.m.; **29** — at Oklahoma, 2:05 p.m. **30** — at Oklahoma, 1:05 p.m.

April 1 — Western Illinois, Hawks Field, 6:35 p.m.; **2** — Western Illinois, Hawks Field, 2:05 p.m. **4** — at Kansas, Lawrence, Kan., 7 p.m.; **5** — at Kansas, 2 p.m.; **6** — at Kansas, 1 p.m.; **8** — at Wichita State, Wichita, Kan., 7 p.m.; **11** — Missouri, Hawks Field, 6:35 p.m.; **12** — Missouri, Hawks Field, 2:05 p.m.; **13** — Missouri, Hawks Field, 1:05 p.m.; **15** — McNeese State, Hawks Field, 6:35 p.m.; **16** — McNeese State, Hawks Field, 2:05 p.m.; **18** — Texas, Hawks Field, 6:35 p.m.; **19** — Texas, Hawks Field, 4:05 p.m.; **20** — Texas, Rosenblatt Stadium (Omaha), 1:05 p.m.; **22** — Creighton, Hawks Field, 6:35 p.m.; **25** — at Texas Tech, Lubbock, Texas, 7 p.m.; **26** — at Texas Tech, Lubbock, Texas, 2 p.m.; **27** — at Texas Tech, Lubbock, Texas, 1 p.m.; **29** — Creighton, Hawks Field, 6:35 p.m.; **30** — Minnesota, Hawks Field, 6:35 p.m.

May 2 — Louisiana Lafayette, Hawks Field, 6:35 p.m.; **3** — Louisiana Lafayette, Hawks Field, 2:05 p.m.; **4** — Louisiana Lafayette, Hawks Field, 11:05 a.m.; **10** — Oklahoma State, Hawks Field, 6:35 p.m.; **11** — Oklahoma State, Hawks Field, 2:05 p.m.; **12** — Oklahoma State, Hawks Field, 1:05 p.m.; **13** — at Creighton, Omaha, Neb. (Rosenblatt), 7 p.m.; **16** — Baylor, Hawks Field, 6:35 p.m.; **17** — Baylor, Hawks Field, 2:05 p.m.; **18** — Baylor, Hawks Field, 1:05 p.m.; **21-25** — at Big 12 Tournament, Oklahoma City, Okla.

Softball Team Earns Respect

Coach Rhonda Revelle's softball team was ranked No. 4 in the USA Today/NFCA coaches' preseason poll, the Huskers' highest ranking since the poll's inception in 1995.

UCLA was No. 1, followed by Arizona and California.

"I know it's just a start, but this is an exciting moment for our program," said Revelle. "That's great because we are expecting to be a top-five team this year."

Nebraska was 50-14 and advanced to the NCAA Women's College World Series last season. The 50 victories were the third most in school history and included a school-record 23 in a row.

The Huskers finished the season ranked sixth in the coaches' poll.

Considering the lofty national ranking, it wasn't surprising that Revelle's team was picked to win the Big 12 title. Texas was picked to finish second, followed by Oklahoma State.

Revelle has 10 players returning from last season's team, among them All-American Kim Ogee and All-Big 12 performers Peaches James, Lisa Wangler and Nicole Trimboli.

Ogee finished first on the team in 10 offensive categories, including batting average (.356), slugging percentage (.582) and on-base percentage (.464). She went into the season ranked second all-time at Nebraska with 79 stolen bases. She needed just 13 to move up to first. ■



Kim Ogee

Softball Schedule

Feb. 7-9 — at ASU/Fiesta Bowl Classic, Phoenix/Tempe, Ariz.: **7** Fresno State, W 1-0; **8** Mississippi State, W 7-5; **9** Massachusetts, W 4-0; Southwest Texas State, W 10-2; **10** Cal State Fullerton, W 2-0; **11-16** — at UNLV Classic, Las Vegas, Nev.: **14** Cal Poly, 5:30 p.m.; Oregon State; **15** California, 10 a.m.; UCLA, 5:30 p.m.; **16** South Carolina, 10 a.m.; **21-23** — NFCA Lead Off Classic, Columbus, Ga.: **21** North Carolina, 1:30 p.m.; Southern Mississippi 4 p.m.; **22** Stanford, 9 a.m.; **23** Bracket Play

March 4 — at Creighton, Omaha, Neb., 5 p.m.; **7-9** — at FSU Seminole Invitational, Tallahassee, Fla.: **7** Southern Illinois, 11 a.m.; Miami (Ohio), 3 p.m.; **8** Troy State, 11 a.m.; **9** Bracket Play; **13-16** — at Kia Classic, Fullerton, Calif.: **13** Notre Dame, 9 a.m.; DePaul, 7 p.m.; **14** Fresno State, 5 p.m.; **15-16** Bracket Play; **18** — UMKC, Bowlin Stadium, 3 & 5 p.m.; **20** — Oklahoma, Bowlin Stadium, 4 & 6 p.m.; **22** — at Texas A&M, College Station, Texas, 2 p.m.; **23** — at Texas A&M, 1 p.m.; **24** — Wichita State, Bowlin Stadium, 5 p.m.; **25** — Drake, Bowlin Stadium, 3 & 5 p.m.; **26** — Creighton, Bowlin Stadium, 6 p.m.; **29** — Texas, Bowlin Stadium, 2 p.m.; **30** — Texas, Bowlin Stadium, 1 p.m.; **31** — Southern Illinois, Bowlin Stadium, 4 p.m.

April 1 — at Creighton, Omaha, Neb., 6 p.m.; **2** — at Iowa State, Ames, Iowa, 3:30 p.m.; **5** — at Baylor, Waco, Texas, 2 p.m.; **6** — at Baylor, 1 p.m.; **10** — Kansas, Bowlin Stadium, 5 p.m.; **12** — Texas Tech, Bowlin Stadium, 2 p.m.; **13** — Texas Tech, Bowlin Stadium, Noon; **15** — Notre Dame, Bowlin Stadium, 3 & 5 p.m.; **16** — Creighton, Bowlin Stadium, 6 p.m.; **19** — Oklahoma State, Bowlin Stadium, 5 p.m.; **20** — Oklahoma State, Bowlin Stadium, Noon; **23** — Iowa State, Bowlin Stadium, 4 p.m.; **25** — at Kansas, Lawrence, Kan., 5 p.m.; **26** — at Missouri, Columbia, Mo., 2 p.m.; **27** — at Missouri, 1 p.m.

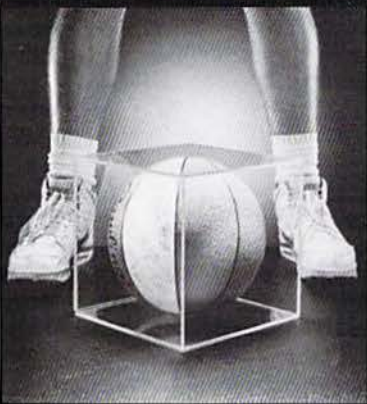
May 1-4 — at Big 12 Tournament, Oklahoma City, Okla.

Softball Roster

| No. Player | Pos. | Ht. | Cl. | Hometown (High School/Previous School) |
|----------------------|------|------|-----|---|
| 18 Boerkircher, Kira | OF | 5-7 | So. | Cozad, Neb. (Cozad) |
| 11 Buchholz, Amanda | SS | 5-5 | Sr. | Ogallala, Neb. (Ogallala) |
| 77 Burgess, Amber | C | 5-10 | Sr. | Littleton, Colo. (Columbine) |
| 42 James, Peaches | RHP | 5-7 | Jr. | Papillion, Neb. (Papillion-LaVista) |
| 7 Kier, Carmen | IF | 5-6 | Fr. | Renton, Wash. (Liberty) |
| 9 Lawhorn, Liz | OF | 5-5 | Jr. | Muscataine, Iowa (Muscataine) |
| 4 Lawrick, Sheena | IF | 5-4 | So. | Calgary, Alberta, Canada (St. Mary's) |
| 59 Linke, Katie | UT | 5-7 | Fr. | Lincoln, Neb. (Northeast) |
| 22 Ogee, Kim | OF | 5-6 | Sr. | Omaha, Neb. (Millard West) |
| 1 Steffan, Anne | OF | 5-7 | So. | Mankato, Minn. (Mankato West) |
| 6 Tacha, KoKo | IF | 5-6 | Fr. | Manhattan, Kan. (Manhattan) |
| 28 Tannahill, Trisha | OF | 5-9 | Fr. | Olathe, Kan. (Olathe East) |
| 19 Tobias, Summer | RHP | 5-9 | Fr. | Temecula, Calif. (Chaparral) |
| 88 Trimboli, Nicole | 1B | 5-8 | Jr. | Colorado Springs, Colo. (Rampart) |
| 25 Wangler, Lisa | OF | 5-8 | Sr. | Chandler, Ariz. (Seton Catholic) |
| 8 Yoachim, Jessica | UT | 5-4 | Fr. | Arkansas City, Kan. (Arkansas City) |
| 34 Yolo, Brittney | C | 5-7 | Jr. | Sebastopol, Calif. (Palomar College) (Analay) |

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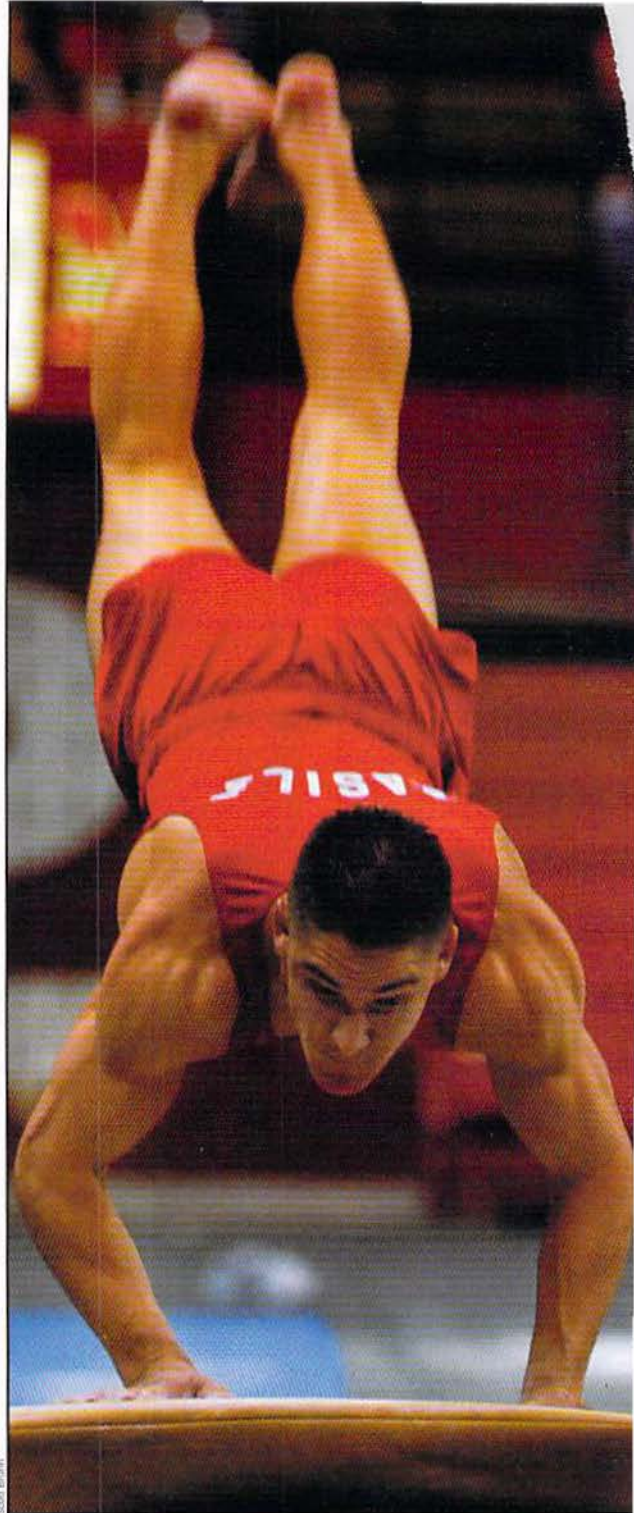
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Men's Gymnastics

Junior Josh Rasile (above) of Phoenix, Ariz., scored a 9.50 on the vault in a meet against Oklahoma to jump from 14th to second in the nation in the event. He also recorded a season-high 9.45 on the rings and is ranked sixth in that event.

Track and Field

Junior transfer Ineta Radevica (left) continues to put her name in the Nebraska track and field record books. The Kraslava, Latvia, native recently recorded a 44-3 1/4 mark in the triple jump, the fourth best in school history. She also made the record books in the long jump with a leap of 20-8 1/2, which ranks sixth in that event.

CROSSWORD

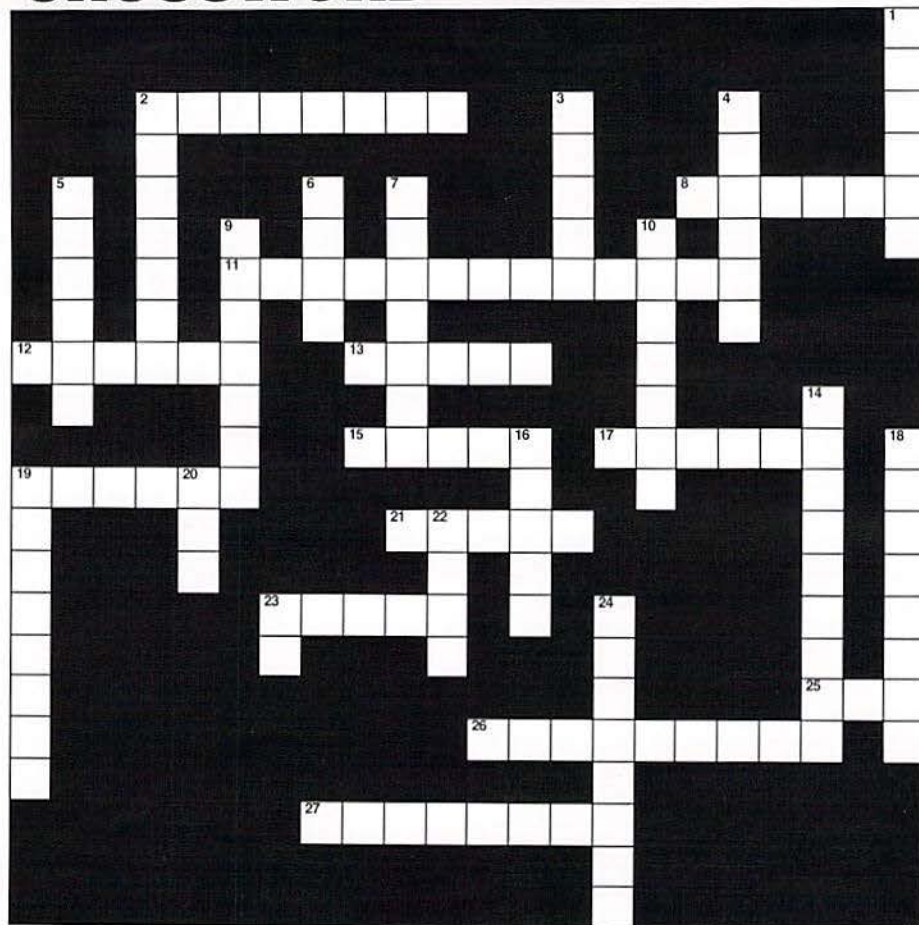
ACROSS

- 2 NU linebacker coach
- 8 Ex-Husker who coached in Super Bowl
- 11 Opponent in 2003 opener
- 12 NU offensive coordinator
- 13 NU running back coach
- 15 NU wide receiver coach
- 17 2001 Heisman Trophy winner
- 19 NU defensive line coach
- 21 Keyuo Craver's younger brother
- 23 Former NU athletic director
- 25 NU home losses in 2002
- 26 NU assistant athletic director for football
- 27 Ex-Husker and Oakland defensive tackle

DOWN

- 1 NU defensive coordinator
- 2 1994 Outland Trophy winner
- 3 Home state of six Nebraska recruits
- 4 NU quarterback recruit
- 5 1997 Outland Trophy winner
- 6 NU assistant head coach
- 7 NU recruit from South Dakota
- 9 NU recruiting coordinator
- 10 NU defensive back coach
- 14 2002 national champion
- 16 NU's only 4-time all-conference selection
- 18 NU athletic director
- 19 NU head coach in 1961
- 20 NU road victories in 2002
- 22 Ex-Husker and Oakland center
- 23 Barrett Ruud's younger brother
- 24 NU's leading tackler in 2002

Answers in April issue



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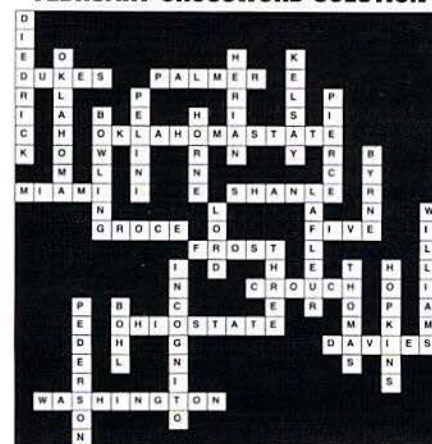
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FEBRUARY CROSSWORD SOLUTION



'Extremely Difficult'

Tenopir says retiring wasn't 'an easy decision, but it's the right decision'



**Mike
BABCOCK**

CHANGE CAN BE GOOD. But it rarely comes easily.

We tend to be creatures of habit, comfortable with the status quo.

Nevertheless, "there's always change in life," Barney Cotton said on the day he was introduced as Nebraska's offensive coordinator and offensive line coach.

"And this happened to be the right time for change here."

The day before, at another news conference in the Don Bryant Media Center, Milt Tenopir and Dan Young announced they were stepping aside after a combined 49 years at Nebraska.

Tenopir, in particular, struggled with his emotions. "It's really hard to walk away," he said. "To me, there's no better job than offensive line coach at the University of Nebraska."

He defined that job, coaching lines that cleared the way to 13 NCAA rushing titles, with countless All-Americans, six Outland Trophy winners and two Lombardi Award winners.

Coach Frank Solich described the 62-year-old Tenopir as "maybe the dean of line coaches around the country." Solich was right, except for the "maybe." Tenopir was the dean.

Cotton was among those he coached, starting at guard in 1978 after playing on the defensive line in 1977. Replacing his former coach was "extremely difficult," said Cotton.

"That was never my goal, to displace anybody."

When the two met in a hallway at the South Stadium on the day Tenopir announced his retirement, "we hugged and tears started flowing," Cotton said. "It was a tough deal."

The next day, Tenopir and Young formally introduced Cotton to the offensive linemen, and sat by while he spoke with his new charges. Then he left the room so that Tenopir and Young could say their personal good-byes. "The transition was handled with so much class," said Cotton.

"I was so impressed at how this sort of changing of the guard took place."

The departures of Tenopir and Young, who also coached the kickers, were the final steps in opening positions for a restructuring of the staff, the likes of which hadn't occurred in 40 years.

Other positions were opened by the firings of defensive assistants George Darlington, Craig Bohl and Nelson Barnes and the promotion of Dave Gillespie to assistant athletic director for football.

In addition, Solich gave up the offensive coordinator's responsibilities.

Young, 61, indicated that he was ready for retirement. Not so Tenopir. "I don't feel like I'm retiring," he said. "I feel that I'm stepping aside because of some health conditions."

He declined to go into detail, except to say he has had problems with his legs since 1997. He had discussed the situation with Solich "probably the third week of the season," he said.

"It has not been an easy decision, but it's the right decision."

Because of the leg problems, Tenopir often rode a golf cart to and from practices, particularly on the grass fields north of Memorial Stadium. The cart also allowed him to escape reporters, who had to act quickly or be left behind as he and, usually, Young rolled past them and out the gate.

Tenopir tried to avoid reporters after practice. But the door to his office was always open. And he never tired of talking about his players, defending them if need be.

Several of those players attended the retirement news conference.

Asked what he would miss most, Tenopir said, "Those guys right there, at practice."

Tenopir said he intended to "sneak out" and watch practice from time to time. It won't be the same if he doesn't. However, he was quick to add, "I won't interfere."

He won't unless his linemen are treated poorly. Then he might try to intercede.

Tenopir developed a unique relationship with those he coached.

Immediately after the mid-January news conference, former Cornhusker Aaron Taylor, the 1997 Outland Trophy winner, was quoted as saying he intended to sever ties with Nebraska as a result of what he perceived to be a forced retirement. Such is the loyalty that Tenopir inspired.

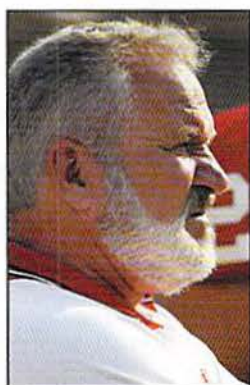
From now on, "I'll just be 'Coach Dan Young, 1983 to 2003,' in the press guide," Young said during the news conference. "It's been a great ride for me, these last 20 years at Nebraska."

Tenopir's wife, Terri, and Young's wife, Ronda, joined them at the podium.

Tenopir continued to try to fight back the tears that had surfaced near the end of his initial remarks. "I'm grateful," he said, haltingly. "Thank Frank . . . I mean that."

All of the assistants, and Solich too, dealt with the emotions of change. Lives have been disrupted, long-standing relationships cut. And those who are gone, whether forced or not, will be missed.

Three weeks after the news conference, following a visit to the South Stadium, Tenopir reaffirmed his comfort with his decision. The time for a change was right. It was not, however, easy. ■



**Milt Tenopir
announced his retirement on Jan. 12.**

Mike Babcock is a former sports columnist for the Lincoln Journal Star. He has covered Nebraska football for more than 20 years. Mike can be reached at MumblyDog@aol.com or P.O. Box 6782, Lincoln, NE 68506.

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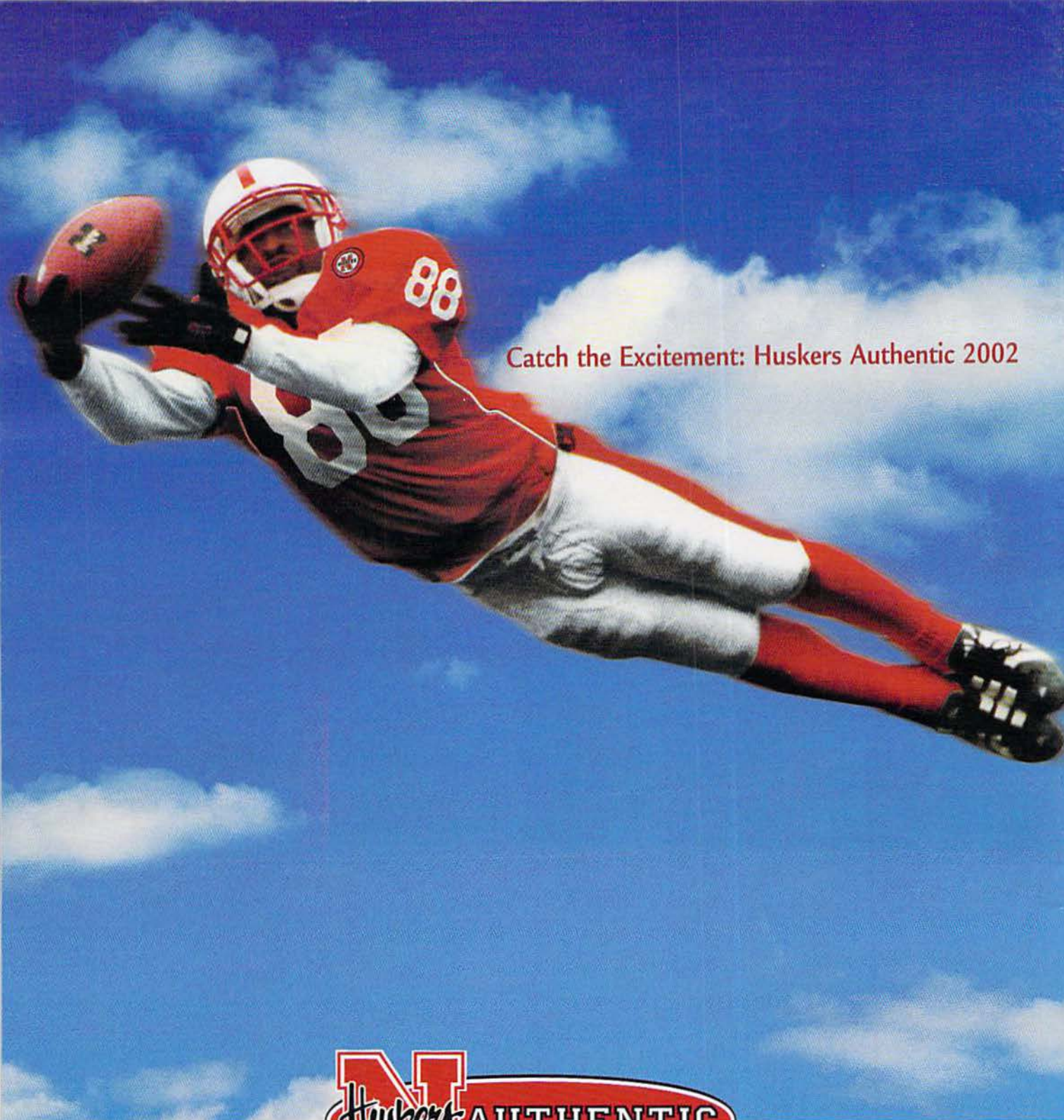
2003 Nebraska Women's Gymnastics

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Opponent</u> | <u>Time</u> |
|-------------|---|-------------|
| Jan. 4 | Georgia | 7:30 p.m. |
| Jan. 11 | at Super Six Challenge (Athens, Ga.) | 3 p.m. |
| Jan. 18 | at Iowa | 7 p.m. |
| Jan. 24 | at Missouri | 7 p.m. |
| Jan. 26 | Alabama | 2 p.m. |
| Feb. 1 | Oklahoma | 7:30 p.m. |
| Feb. 7 | at Iowa State | 7 p.m. |
| Feb. 14 | at Ohio State | 6 p.m. |
| Feb. 23 | Masters Classic | 2 p.m. |
| March 1 | at Penn State | 6 p.m. |
| March 14 | at Michigan | 6:30 p.m. |
| March 23 | Iowa State | 2 p.m. |
| March 29 | at Big 12 Championships (Columbia, Mo.) | 7 p.m. |
| April 12 | at NCAA Regionals (TBA) | TBA |
| April 24-26 | NCAA Championships (Lincoln, Neb.) | TBA |

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